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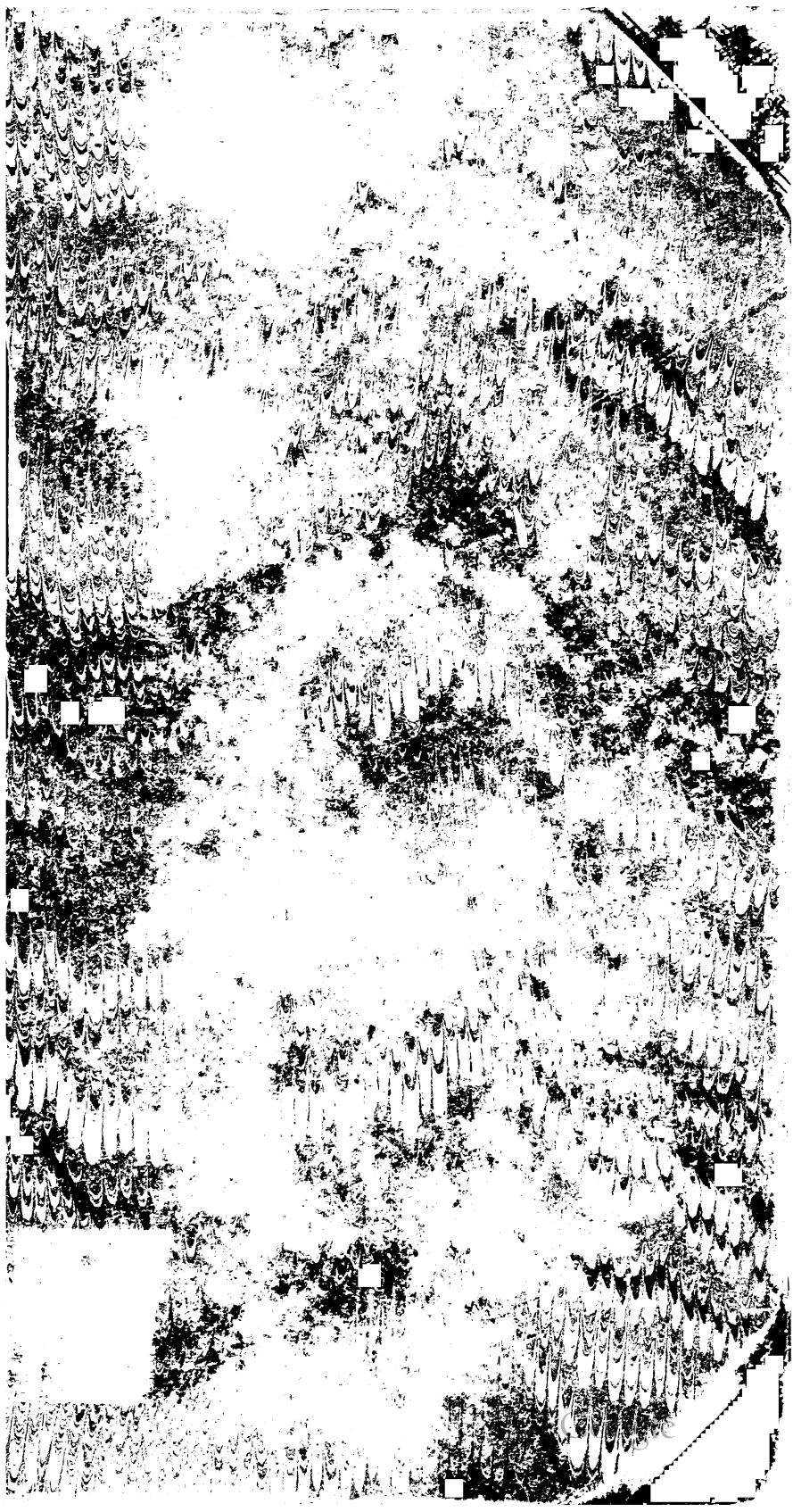
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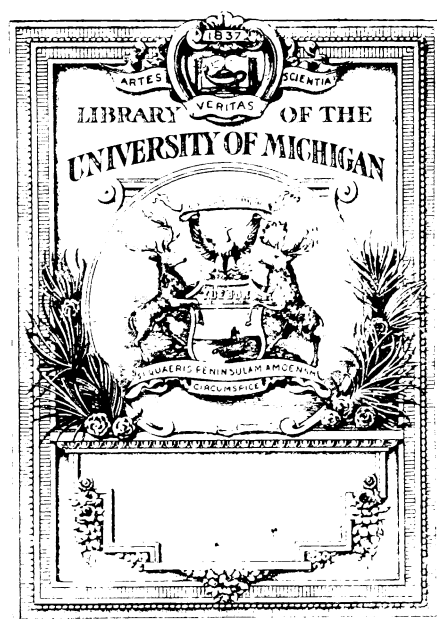
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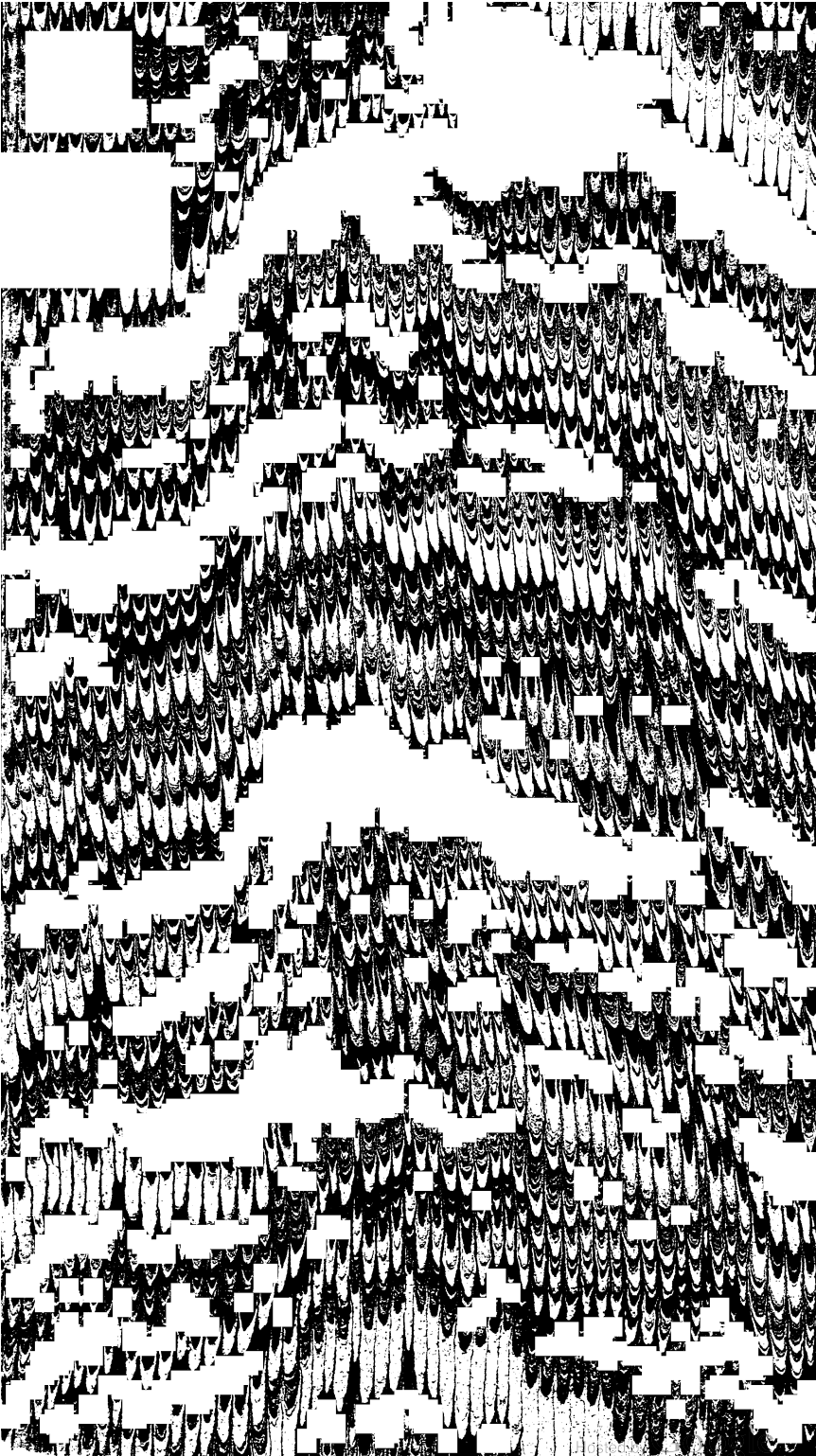
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HISTORY
OF THE
AMERICAN THEATRE.

BY
WILLIAM DUNLAP,

AUTHOR OF MEMOIRS OF GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE, &c.

Where is that palace whereinto sometimes
Foul things intrude not?

The corruption of the Theatre is no disproof of its innate and primitive utility.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1833.

LONDON :
F. SHOBERL, JUN. LONG ACRE.

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DEDICATED TO

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER, ESQ.

BY HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

COLLEY CIBBER, in his "Apology," the best book ever written on the subject of the Theatre, thus speaks of the increase of Playhouses in London, and the effect on the actors and the public:—"Their extraordinary number, of course, reduced them to live upon the gratification of such hearers as they knew would be best pleased with public offence; and public offence, of what kind soever, will always be a good reason for making laws to restrain it."

We have seen acted over and over again, in America, that which Cibber describes and laments as occurring in his time:—"They were reduced to have recourse to foreign novelties; L'Abbe, Balon, and Mademoiselle Subligny, three of the most famous dancers of the French Opera at that period, were at several times brought over, at extraordinary rates, to revive that sickly appetite which plain sense and nature had satiated. But, alas! there was no recovering to a sound constitution by those merely costly cordials; the novelty of a dance was but of a short duration, and perhaps hurtful in its consequence; for it made a play without a dance less endured than it had been before, when such dancing was not to be had;" and the same may be said of every deviation from "plain sense and nature."

Colley Cibber's "Apology" is one of those books in which a man finds all that he wants to know or say on the subject he is considering.

Should we not think, that instead of Cibber, some writer of the present day, who had seen what he thought better days—some old fellow of seventy, in the year 1832, wrote

the following ?—" Polite hearers," in former days, " would be content with polite entertainments ; and I remember the time when plays, without the aid of farce or pantomime, were as decently attended as operas or private assemblies ; where a noisy sloven would have passed his time as uneasily in a front box as in a drawing-room ; when a hat upon a man's head there, would have been looked upon as a sure mark of a brute or a booby ; but of all this I have seen, too, the reverse—where, in the presence of ladies at a play, common civility has been set at defiance, and the privilege of being a rude clown, even to a nuisance, has, in a manner, been demanded as one of the rights of English liberty." " Yet, methinks, the liberty of seeing a play in quiet has as laudable a claim to protection, as the privilege of not suffering you to do it has to impunity."

Here the question is fairly stated as to the right which the decent or " polite hearer " has to protection from all annoyance ; and that right appears so evident as to need no argument. The director of the theatre is obliged to afford this protection to the persons whom he has invited to see and hear the pieces advertised. The director is bound to exclude any improper person, known to be such—to prohibit the entrance of persons known as coming for improper or immoral purposes, and of any person intoxicated, or evincing improper character by behaviour—and if any such gain admittance, to employ force to expel them.

Another question is treated of by Cibber,—that of licensing the performances which shall be brought on the stage. He decides in favour of a licenser, and compares the liberty of throwing abroad improper maxims or indecent jokes, to another species of liberty : " I mean that," says he, " of throwing squibs and crackers at all spectators without distinction." If he had not added, " on a Lord Mayor's day," we should have supposed that the passage was written in

New York after a 4th of July. The laws for the government of the *Theatre Français* remedy this, and the other evils attendant on the English and American theatre.

In ages of barbarism, the professors of the fine arts were under the necessity of becoming the servants of the lords of the earth, the Nimrods, the mighty hunters and exterminators of men, for protection and bread. They were patronised. The poet, the musician, the painter, and the player, looked to one ignorant prince or baron for protection from the injuries threatened by another. Thus the companies of players were "the King's servants," "the Duke's," "the Lord Admiral's," or the lord's of the castle, or other stronghold.

Brute force lorded it over intellect and the arts, and their professors were considered servile. Where intellect predominates, the arts are honoured, and their professors hold the highest place in public esteem. On the contrary, the brute of the good old times, and the fool of the improved modern day, have thought, and would have it thought, that artists are their inferiors.

As the arts, in the course of progressive civilization, emancipated themselves, like other slaves, at the moment of acquiring liberty, they were inclined to become licentious;—thus the poet and the player required legal restraint.

The first licenser we read of for the English drama was Sir James Hawes, the Lord Mayor of London. The office was subsequently, in England, filled by the Lord Chamberlain.

The first paid attention particularly to morals, the subsequent were occupied principally by politics or the protection of royalty.

From what has been said of the state of the histrionic art in the dark ages, and its abasement when it was the slave of ignorance clothed with power, and when, being partly emancipated, it became mischievous as the encourager of licen-

tiousness, it will be seen that it has been progressively improving to the present time; and although occasionally in some respects retrograding, yet the Drama in its moral character is now purer than in any former time since the glories of Grecian republicanism and literature.

To secure and further this improvement, the laws and regulations above recommended would be found sufficient in our republic.

I will here make my acknowledgments to the friends who have aided me in my Work. The valuable library of the Historical Society has been open to me, through the politeness of John Delafield, Esq. I have been encouraged and assisted by James K. Paulding, and John Inman, Esqrs. The researches of Elias Hicks, Esq. into the early history of the theatre of our country have been liberally communicated, and have been of great use to me. Doctors Hosack and Francis will be seen to have furnished me with valuable materials. And to William B. Wood, Esq. I owe a particular expression of gratitude, for indefatigable attention to my inquiries, and such prompt answers to my letters as have enabled me to record much valuable matter that must otherwise have escaped me.

I have made use of the authority of Colley Cibber in this Preface, and cannot better conclude it than in his words. "I would fain flatter myself that those who are not too wise to frequent the theatre (or have wit enough to distinguish what sort of sights there either do honour or disgrace to it) may think their national diversion no contemptible subject for a more able historian than I pretend to be. If I have any particular qualification for the task more than another, it is that I am perhaps the only person living (however unworthy) from whom the same materials can be collected."

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THE AMERICAN THEATRE.

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IF the fine arts, as we believe, are effective instruments for promoting the best interests of man — if the pleasure of the virtuous, as Plato tells us, is their aim and the test of their success—if their great sphere and scope is that *beau ideal* which lifts us above the grovelling, the vile, and the sensual — it is the duty of every good citizen to encourage their cultivation in the country of his birth or residence, and to cherish the memories of those, whatever their motives, who introduced them.

The histrionic art is so inseparably connected in our minds with the Drama, that, in contemplating

tragedy and comedy, we see Roscius and Garrick, Talma and Clairon, Kemble and Siddons, Cooper and Merry, Lewis and Farren, Hodgkinson, Moreton, Wood, Wignell, Jefferson, Harwood, and the long list of artists who imbodyed in themselves the spirits of Eschylus and Sophocles, Shakspeare and Jonson, Racine and Molière, and the hundreds who have delighted and will continue to delight millions, by exciting terror and pity, or contempt for baseness, and admiration of magnanimity.

The professors of the histrionic art become commentators on the works of the poet and living illustrations of his ideas. By the magic of this art, the immortal works of the dramatist are endowed with a more vivid immortality; and Hamlet, Macbeth, and Richard, Desdemona, Viola, and Juliet, have doubly "a local habitation and a name." The pictures of folly, ignorance, or humorous absurdity, alive in the closet, have a double life on the stage.

Dramatic poetry is one of the first of the fine arts. The histrionic art, not complete in itself, because dependent on the poet, is still so important as the handmaid of poetry, that its history, as a part of the history of any country, is positively necessary to the understanding of its literature and its manners. The rise, progress, and cultivation, of the Drama mark the progress of refinement and the state of manners at any given period in any country.

Without the aid of the actor, there are thousands who would never have heard the name of Shakspeare; but who, by his aid, are familiar with the

most sublime, moral, and beautiful, sentiments that ever adorned a language. That there are evils, and perversions, and abuses, attendant upon theatrical exhibitions, as on all sublunary things, no one is more ready to admit than the writer, and it shall be his aim to point them out as it is his wish to remedy them ; but he firmly believes that the theatre is in itself a powerful engine for the improvement of man, and that it only wants the directing hand of an enlightened society to make it the pure source of civilization and virtue.

Entertaining these views, it appears to us that a history of the American theatre is a subject of importance, as connected with the history of our literature and manners. Such a history will tend to mark the growth and improvement of our country, and may be eminently subservient to the cause of morals, whether the theatre, as it exists, is so or not. With this object in view, we shall endeavour to rescue from oblivion such facts relative to the Drama in this country as can now be collected, and to combine them with the knowledge personally belonging to us, gained by a diversified experience of many years. The whole would soon, if not thus recorded, be swept from the memory of man ; for few now live who can assist to throw light on the early dramatic history of the New World.

Before we embark with the adventurers who introduced the Drama in its living shape among the English colonists of America, we will look at the state of the stage in the mother country at that period.

Garrick had reached the summit of fame and perfection in his arduous profession about the year 1745. He had been rejected by Fleetwood and Rich, the managers of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, in 1741; and, after a probation at Ipswich, he was received and fostered at the theatre in Goodman's Fields by his friend Giffard, the predecessor, as proprietor and manager of that place of entertainment, of William Hallam, deservedly called the father of the American stage.

On the boards of Goodman's Fields theatre, from which, ten years afterwards, issued the leaders of that company which planted the Drama in America, the English Roscius first displayed his unrivalled talents to a London audience, and perfected himself in that art which has immortalized him, embalming his name with that of the far greater artist and man, who "exhausted worlds and then imagined new." Let every artist hold in mind that it was by hard study that Garrick rose to this height, and established his reputation as a man and a gentleman, as well as his fame for unrivalled skill in his profession as an actor.

In consequence of the success of Garrick, Goodman's Fields theatre became the centre of attraction. Drury Lane and Covent Garden were deserted. At the end of the season of 1742, Fleetwood was glad to engage both manager and actor. Giffard, now befriended by Garrick, was invited to Drury Lane, and Roscius entered upon the scene of his future triumphs in the brilliant career of fame and fortune.

Mr. William Hallam succeeded Giffard at Goodman's Fields, becoming the proprietor of Garrick's cradle, rendered famous, but unprofitable, from the circumstance of having had such a nursling. Drury Lane flourished, and the successor of Giffard and Garrick became bankrupt in 1750. This event led to the voyage of discovery planned by the manager and executed by his brother Lewis, the father of that Lewis Hallam who is remembered still as old Mr. Hallam.

It is well known that the state of the Drama was in 1750 much more brilliant than it has been for the last half century, or is now in Great Britain. The best and greatest men of the country wrote plays and attended their performance. The pit of the theatre was the resort of wit and learning; while fashion, beauty, taste, and refinement, the proud and exclusive aristocracy of the land, took their stations in the boxes, surrounding the assemblage of poets and critics below. In the course of our history we may find the causes which have degraded the Drama, while every other species of literature and art have been rising in estimation, and every science progressing to its destined perfection.

The William and Lewis Hallam mentioned above were brothers of Admiral Hallam. There was a fourth brother, an actor, who was killed accidentally in the green-room by the celebrated Charles Macklin, the original of all the Shylocks from that time to this, and author of *The Man of the World*.

Lewis was a member of his brother William's company at Goodman's Fields, and sustained the line of first low comedian. His wife, who was related to Mr. Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, played the first line of tragedy and comedy. To have been the first low comedian, and the first tragic and comic actress in a company which had to strive against Covent Garden, and to vie with Drury Lane, having Garrick as its leader, gives us reason to believe that Mr. and Mrs. Hallam were far above mediocrity in their profession; and tradition fully supports the belief.

As we have said, in the year 1750, William Hallam, the manager of Goodman's Fields, failed. On winding up his business, his debts proved to be five thousand pounds, a trifling sum as the amount of loss in such a complicated and hazardous speculation. The accounts and conduct of Mr. Hallam were so fair and satisfactory to his creditors that they presented him with the wardrobe and other theatrical property of the establishment; thus discharging him from debt, and leaving him in possession of a capital to commence business anew. Under these circumstances he turned his thoughts to the New World, and conceived the plan of sending a company of players to the colonies. The thought proves that William Hallam was no common man, and his confiding such a scheme to Lewis is equally in favour of the character of the latter.

Lewis and his wife, having consented to cross the Atlantic and seek their fortunes in what might

then not improperly be called the western wilderness, the ex-manager's next step was to find suitable persons to fill up the *corps dramatique*, and to induce them to join his brother and sister in this theatrical forlorn hope. He succeeded in enlisting a good and efficient company, willing to leave their country (and perhaps their creditors), and fitted to ensure success to the perilous adventure. The emigrants were next assembled at the house of William Hallam; a list of stock plays was produced by him, with attendant farces, and the cast of the whole agreed upon in full assembly of the body politic: which appears to have been a well organized republic, every member of which had his part assigned to him, both private and public, behind and before the curtain. Lewis Hallam was appointed manager, chief magistrate, or king, and William, who staid at home, was to be "viceroy over him," according to Trinculo's division of offices. The brothers were to divide profits equally, after deducting the expenses and shares. Thus William was entitled to half of such profits as projector and proprietor, and Lewis to the other half as manager and conductor.

The names of the persons who, under the direction of the Hallams, introduced the Drama into our country having been communicated to the writer by one of the number, he takes pleasure in recording them, and feels that, although under other circumstances they would be, perhaps, suffered to float down the tide of time to oblivion, their ad-

venture and its consequences render them worthy subjects for the pen of the dramatic historian, and interesting to all who take an interest in the literature of our country. Mr. and Mrs. Hallam were first in consequence and in talents. Mr. Rigby played the first line in tragedy and comedy, and was only inferior to the leaders. Mrs. Rigby does not appear to have had high pretensions. Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson were of the class called useful. Miss Palmer, Mr. Singleton, Mr. Herbert, Mr. Winnell, or Wynel, Mr. Adcock, and Mr. Malone, completed the company, and filled the *dramatis personæ* of the plays that were cast at the proprietor's house.

Of the twenty-four plays and their attendant farces, cast and put in study before leaving England, we have the names of the following:—*The Merchant of Venice*, *The Fair Penitent*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Jane Shore*, *The Recruiting Officer*, *King Richard III*, *The Careless Husband*, *The Constant Couple*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Theodosius* (a great favourite every where, added our informant), *Provoked Husband*, *Tamerlane*, *The Inconstant*, *Woman's a Riddle*, *The Suspicious Husband*, *The Conscious Lovers*, *George Barnwell*, *The Committee*, and *The Twin Rivals*. We cannot record the names of these twenty plays without interest. They were doubtless the favourites of the metropolis of Great Britain at that time, and stood paramount wherever the stage spoke the English tongue. How many of them now hold possession of the scene? At most, six; and of the six four are Shakspeare's,

the only four from his pen in the twenty. All Farquhar's comedies, whose dialogue for wit was unrivalled but by Shakspeare's, are laid on the shelf, or occasionally revived at a benefit, cut down to afterpieces. Colley Cibber's *Careless Husband*, pronounced by Pope the best comedy in the language, cannot be tolerated; and even Bishop Hoadley's *Suspicious Husband* exhibits licentiousness that we turn from as unfit for representation. The farces cast and studied for the common stock were—*Lethe*, *The Lying Valet*, *Miss in her Teens*, *The Mock Doctor*, *The Devil to Pay*, *Hob in the Well*, *Damon and Philida*, and *The Anatomist*. In the last it is recorded that Rigby was so excellent in the French doctor, that the farce stood first on the list for popularity and profit. From this we gather that Mr. Rigby had talents of Hodgkinsonian order, as he was the first in tragedy and genteel comedy, and excellent in farce. Of pantomimes, the company had but one for many years, which was called *Harlequin Collector, or the Miller Deceived*. We will remark of these eight farces that three were Garrick's, and two of the three are still played.

Lewis Hallam, junior, known by those who remember him by the familiar appellation of old Hallam, (the son of the Lewis Hallam who led these adventurers as manager and first low comedian), from whom this account of the adventure and its origin is derived, was at the time a boy of twelve years, and at a grammar-school at Cambridge. The

choice was given him of remaining at his school, or going with his parents, and he had no hesitation in preferring the latter. A younger son, Adam, and a daughter, soon introduced on the stage as Miss Hallam, made a part of the company of emigrants, and eventually of the company of players. A daughter, still younger, being then six years of age, was left with her uncle William, and became afterward famous in dramatic history as Mrs. Mattocks.

We have said that the profits of the adventure were to be equally divided between the original proprietor and projector and his brother the conductor and manager. These profits were to be the residue and remainder, after deducting the shares, for this was what is known among players as a sharing company or scheme, and so continued until some time after our revolution. In such schemes the manager has one or more shares as reward for the trouble of governing; one or more shares pay him for the use, wear and tear, of the property; one or more shares according to his abilities or reputation as an actor; and he generally avails himself of the power which rests with him of casting plays so as to keep up his reputation by appropriating the best or most popular parts to himself. The remaining shares, after the manager is satisfied, are divided among the members of the commonwealth, according to ability, reputation in the profession, or the influence obtained by becoming favourites with the public.

Hallam's company, under the appellation of the American Company, in process of time underwent a change. The principal performers became partners in the property ; the number of sharers were diminished ; actors were engaged on weekly salaries ; and by degrees the present system was established, in which one man, or a company forming a copartnership, are lessees or proprietors, and the stage-manager and performers are hired.

It is proper in the early history of the stage in this country to state many particulars which would be out of place in a record of the affairs of a more recent date. As we have the power to lay before the reader the original proportions in which the receipts of this first company were divided, with the shares assigned to each individual, we shall proceed so to do.

The number of shares was fixed at eighteen. The number of adult performers was twelve, including the manager, each being entitled to one share. Mr. Hallam had another share as manager. Four shares were assigned to the property, and one share was allowed for the manager's three children. It is to be presumed that the four shares assigned for the property were to be divided between the brothers, as the profits of the partnership, otherwise it is hard to say from whence profit was to accrue.

Having despatched these preliminaries, we will attend this band of adventurers on their voyage of experiment. Early in the month of May they embarked in the *Charming Sally*, Captain Lee, and

after a voyage of six weeks, a short passage in those days, arrived safely at Yorktown, Virginia.

How many reflections does the name of this place suggest! What recollections to the American of the present day! Yorktown, the scene of that great drama of real life, or rather the catastrophe of the military drama, which, in 1780, placed never-dying laurels on the brow of that man who, sent by Governor Dinwiddie in 1753, the year after the arrival of our adventurers, to summon the French posts on the Ohio to surrender to the arms of England, is called by the writers of the *Universal History* *one Major Washington*. This Major Washington very probably witnessed the first representations of plays in Virginia; and one at least of the same company of players (the second Lewis Hallam, then a boy) performed repeatedly before him, when he was the first magistrate of the greatest republic the world had ever seen, and the theme of eulogium to every enlightened or philanthropic statesman the world possessed.

In 1610, the first effectual colonization of English America took place. In 1751, Franklin calculated the English population of the colonies at one million. Such was the increase in one hundred and forty years, and the arts, following in the train of civilization, already prepared to rear the standard of taste.

As the first settlers of Virginia were of the established English Church, and that form of religion was supported by law to the exclusion of all others,

it is probable that William Hallam was induced to send his company thither in preference to the other colonies, from the knowledge that Episcopalians were then more liberal in regard to the Drama than most other sects, although not less intolerant in respect to religious creeds or worship than their Presbyterian brethren, and more so than most other denominations of Christians.

The foresight exercised by the Hallams in preparing their company for immediate action on their arrival in America, merits applause. The pieces had been selected, cast, and put in study, before embarkation; and during the passage they were regularly rehearsed. The quarter-deck of the *Charming Sally* was the stage, and, whenever the winds and weather permitted, the heroes and heroines of the sock and buskin performed their allotted parts, rehearsing all the plays that had been selected, particularly those fixed upon to form the first theatrical exhibition which was to enliven the wilds of America.

It is easy to imagine the fun which these rehearsals, with the drilling of the corps, must have created among the tars. We know the salutary effect of the admirable plan of that skilful navigator Parry, who, by introducing the amusements of the theatre, when his ship was locked up amid the gloom of a half-year's polar night, preserved the health of his crew by preserving their cheerfulness. Sailors are peculiarly alive to dramatic representations — in that, as in some other

points, they resemble children ; and the novelty of having such a set of passengers, with the humour of many of the pieces rehearsed, must have delighted Jack ; while the nautical drollery of the audience must have been occasionally a source of equal amusement to the players.

The circumstance of a complete company of comedians crossing the Atlantic together and regularly drilling during the voyage, each one in his respective line, must have given a degree of precision to the first dramatic performances in the New World, which is found wanting in many theatres, even metropolitan, at this time.

Williamsburg was then the capital of Virginia ; and thither the players proceeded from Yorktown, the place of their landing. Upon application made to Governor Dinwiddie, permission was granted to erect or fit up a building for a theatre*. Hallam found a building which he judged to be sufficient for his purpose, and proceeded to metamorphose it into pit, box, gallery, and stage. It was a long house in the suburbs of the town, probably erected as a store-house by the early emigrants ; it was unoccupied, and the manager purchased it. This was the first theatre opened in America by a company of regular comedians, and although within

* Burke, in his *History of Virginia*, says (ch. ii.) that, under the presidency of Thomas Lee, the New-York company of comedians obtained permission to erect a theatre in Williamsburg, i. e. in the year 1750, when no New-York company existed, or any other on the continent. Governor Dinwiddie arrived in 1752.

the boundaries of the metropolis of the Ancient Dominion, the seat of William and Mary College, and the residence of all the officers of his majesty's government, was so near the woods that the manager could stand within the door and shoot pigeons for his dinner, which he more than once actually did. This theatre was situated on the spot occupied now by the house of the late Judge Tucker. After its destruction by fire, another was erected below the old Capitol. The reader will observe that the proprietors of this enterprise had not included an orchestra in the plan of their establishment; but fortunately a professor of music had been before them as a pioneer of the fine arts, and Mr. Pelham, who taught the harpsichord in the town, was engaged with his instrument to represent that splendid assemblage of wind and stringed instruments which we now look for in an orchestra.

On the fifth of September, 1752, at Williamsburg, the capital of Virginia, the first play performed in America by a regular company of comedians was represented to a delighted audience. The piece was *The Merchant of Venice*, and it was followed by the farce of *Lethe*. Thus Shakspeare had the first place in time as in merit as the dramatist of the western world, and Garrick the honour of attending upon his master. *Lethe* was at that time new even in London, and a popular afterpiece. The cast of the first play and farce represented in America is worth recording, and shows the strength of the company and the various lines of the per-

formers, who are all included in the following bill, except Mrs. Clarkson, Mrs. Rigby, and Adam Hallam, a child.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Bassanio,	Mr. Rigby.
Antonio,	Clarkson.
Gratiano,	Singleton.
Salanio and Duke,	Herbert.
Salarino and Gobbo,	Winnel.
Launcelot and Tubal,	Hallam.
Shylock,	Malone.
Servant to Portia,	Master Lewis Hallam,
	(being his first appearance on any stage).
Nerissa,	Miss Palmer.
Jessica, (her first appearance on any stage)	Hallam.
Portia,	Mrs. Hallam.

LETHE.

Esop,	Mr. Clarkson.
Old Man,	Malone.
Fine Gentleman,	Singleton.
Frenchman,	Rigby.
Charon,	Herbert.
Mercury,	Adcock.
Drunken Man and Tattoo,	Hallam.
John,	Winnel.
Mrs. Tattoo,	Miss Palmer.
Fine Lady,	Mrs. Hallam.

The Tailor was cut out, and Lord Chalkstone was not in being when the company left home. He was an after-thought of the author's.

It will be observed by the above bill that the first night of performing in America was the first night of appearance on any stage of Lewis Hallam the second. He had one line to speak, apparently an

easy task, but when he found himself in presence of the audience he was panic-struck. He stood motionless and speechless, until, bursting into tears, he walked off the stage, making a most inglorious exit. We need not say that he was the hero and favourite in tragedy and comedy for nearly half a century.

This night's performance is rendered the more memorable, as it gave occasion for the first composition connected with the drama which was written for, or addressed particularly to, an American audience — a prologue especially composed for the purpose, probably on ship-board, by Mr. Singleton. It was spoken by Mr. Rigby. These lines were written down as recited at the request of the author by Lewis Hallam the second, forty years after their *debut*. Mr. Hallam seemed to remember every transaction of that period, every circumstance attending these first histrionic adventures, as though they were of yesterday. We think lines brought forward under such auspices are worthy of record, and accordingly give them.

To this New World, from famed Britannia's shore,
Through boist'rous seas where foaming billows roar,
The Muse, who Britons charm'd for many an age,
Now sends her servants forth to tread your stage ;
Britain's own race, though far removed, to shew
Patterns of every virtue they should know.
Though gloomy minds through ignorance may rail,
Yet bold examples strike where languid precepts fail.
The world's a stage where mankind act their parts ;
The stage a world to show their various arts ;

C

While the soul, touch'd by Nature's tenderest laws,
 Has all her passions rous'd in virtue's cause.
 Reason we hear, and coolly may approve,
 But all's inactive till the passions move.
 Such is the human mind, so weak, so frail,
 "Reason's her chart, but Passion is her gale."
 Then raise the gale to waft fair Virtue o'er
 The sea of life where Reason points the shore.
 But, ah! let Reason guide the course along,
 Lest Passion, listening to some siren's song,
 Rush on the rocks of Vice, where all is lost,
 And shipwreck'd Virtue renders up the ghost.

Too oft, we own, the stage, with dangerous art,
 In wanton scenes has play'd the siren's part:
 Yet if the Muse, unfaithful to her trust,
 Has sometimes stray'd from what is pure and just,
 Has she not oft, with awful, virtuous rage,
 Struck home at vice, and nobly trod the stage?
 Made tyrants weep, the conscious murderer stand,
 And drop the dagger from his trembling hand?
 Then, as you treat a favourite fair's mistake,
 Pray spare her foibles for her virtue's sake;
 And while her chastest scenes are made appear,
 (For none but such will find admittance here)
 The Muse's friends, we hope, will join our cause,
 And crown our best endeavours with applause.

Mr. Singleton afterwards published a volume of poems; the principal or longest was descriptive, or intended so to be, of the West India islands.

CHAPTER II.

Departure of the Company from Virginia—Annapolis—First Theatre in New-York — First Theatre in Philadelphia — Death of Hallam, the first Manager in America — Succeeded by Douglass — Old American Company in New-York under Douglass—Second Theatre in New-York—Second and third Theatres in Philadelphia—Third Theatre in New-York—Newport — Theatrical Expenses and Profits — Customs of the Theatre — Benefit Bill — Destruction of the third New-York Theatre.

THE precise date at which the comedians left Williamsburg is not mentioned in the memoranda taken from the dictation of Lewis Hallam the second. At their departure Governor Dinwiddie gave the manager a certificate signed in council, recommending the company as comedians, and testifying to the propriety of their behaviour as men.

It would answer no useful end to follow the Thespians in their manifold wanderings; but a notice of the time and manner of introducing the theatre into our principal cities, and some of the changes which occurred in the company, shall be recorded as far as information can be now obtained.

A writer in the Maryland Gazette, under date of June 19th, 1828, claims for Annapolis the first theatre, in point of time, erected in the United States. He says, "In the year 1752, it appears, from the files of the Maryland Gazette, that plays

were performed in what is there called the new theatre—so called, I presume, in contradistinction to the temporary theatres previously used, which I am told were such commercial warehouses as could be gotten, and substituted for the purpose*.” This writer gives the following advertisement:

By permission of his Honour the President. At the new theatre in Annapolis, by the company of comedians, on Monday next, being the 13th of this instant July, 1752, will be performed a comedy called *The Beaux' Stratagem*. Likewise a farce called *The Virgin Unmasked*. To begin precisely at 7 o'clock. Tickets to be had at the printing-office. Box 10 shillings, pit 7 and 6 pence, gallery 5 shillings. No person to be admitted behind the scenes.

The writer in question says, “ the names of the company, as no *dramatis personæ* are given, I am unable to ascertain. In the advertisement of *Richard the III.*, which was acted twice, the character of Richard was performed by a Mr. Wynell, and that of Richmond by a Mr. Herbert. In another play the name of Mr. Eyarson is mentioned.”

In the first chapter, the account given by Lewis Hallam, the son of the manager, is followed. He was then twelve years of age. It appears that the company arrived at Yorktown in June, as the passage was six weeks, and they sailed early in May. From his account they did not play at Williamsburg until the 5th of September, which leaves ample time for Winnel (Wynell) and Herbert to

* Probably used by boys or young men to enact plays after their fashion, as was the case, and will be the case everywhere.

have gone to Annapolis, and to have performed with a Mr. Eyarson, who as we have seen was not one of William Hallam's company, and others who had associated for the purpose of performing plays. Winnel and Herbert were inferiors in Hallam's company, and their performing the parts of Richard and Richmond accords with this supposition.

The writer in the Maryland Gazette goes on to say, that "The theatre (in Annapolis) which in 1752 is called the new theatre, was a neat brick building, tastefully arranged, and competent to contain between five and six hundred persons. It was built upon ground which had been leased from the Protestant Episcopal church in this city. When the lease, about ten or twelve years ago, had expired, the church took possession of the theatre. It was sold. It was pulled down merely to procure the materials of which it was built. Scarcely a fragment of it now remains. It was the oldest theatre in the United States. It was the earliest temple reared in our country to the dramatic Muse. Perhaps it was the first spot upon which the characters of Shakspeare were exhibited to the people of the western world. It would hereafter have become an object at which the citizens of this ancient metropolis would have pointed with pride, which the curious would have sought, and which the admirers of genius and the drama would have revered."

Such is the claim put in by the citizen of Annapolis. That the whole of Hallam's company were

not there is proved by the silence of his son Lewis, and by the circumstance of two inferior performers playing the first parts. Winnel and Herbert we find at Williamsburg in September, playing in their subordinate stations.

The claim for Annapolis of having erected the first theatre, the first temple to the dramatic Muse, appears fully made out, notwithstanding the second Lewis Hallam's statement as given above; and yet that this circumstance should have escaped him, who played in Annapolis again and again, in his father's company probably, in Douglass's certainly, in 1772, and afterwards, when the company was under the firm of Hallam and Henry, appears very unaccountable.

The third stage on which the productions of the dramatic Muse were exhibited to the inhabitants of the New World was in Nassau Street, New-York. A theatre was erected on the spot long since occupied by the old Dutch church. This was the second building expressly erected for the purpose of dramatic exhibitions in America. We have seen that the first appearance of the histrionic artists was at Williamsburg, Virginia, in a house which had been previously occupied for other purposes, probably as a store-house. Annapolis has the honour of having raised the first temple to the Muses, and thither the company, led by Lewis Hallam, proceeded from Williamsburg, and, after performing their stock plays and farces, visited and performed at Upper Marlborough, Piscataway,

and Port Tobacco, then places of wealth and consequence in Maryland. Hallam opened his theatre in Nassau Street, New-York, on the 17th of September, 1753, one year after the first dramatic representation at Williamsburg.

It has been remarked that the south, from the universally admitted character of its population, was best fitted for the reception of the Drama. The Presbyterians of the New-England provinces were opposed to any innovations upon their ascetic habits, and particularly to the introduction of those "profane stage-plays" which had been the delight of the Jacobite cavaliers, the enemies of their forefathers. New-York, originally a Dutch province, retained much of the language and manners of that people, and could only be considered as a resort after the southern provinces. The Quakers of Philadelphia were of all people the most opposed to scenic representations; and that population which, by its influx and increase, has changed the city of Penn from its drab-coloured austerity to the bland and polished amenity of the many-coloured receptacles of literature and fine arts, was then in its incipient state. It was therefore wisely, as we have seen, that William Hallam, the manager of the London theatre in which Garrick attained to fame, directed his brother Lewis to the genial south, and Virginia and Maryland received the adventurers with a joyous welcome.

After the south, New-York presented the fairest field for the efforts of the comedians, and they

opened their theatre with the following bill, which is given as an historic document. Particularity of this kind would be unnecessary in regard to events of more recent date, and out of place in a history of the theatre; but in this early stage of the work before us, we think a play-bill a valuable source of information, and gladly insert it.

By his Excellency's authority.

By a Company of Comedians from London, at the New Theatre in Nassau Street, the present evening, being the 17th of September, (1753), will be presented a comedy called

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

The part of Young Bevil to be performed by Mr. Rigby.

The part of Mr. Sealand to be performed by Mr. Malone:

Sir John Bevil by Mr. Bell.

Myrtle by Mr. Clarkson.

Climberton by Mr. Miller.

Humphrey by Mr. Adcock.

Daniel by Master L. Hallam.

The part of Tom to be performed by Mr. Singleton.

The part of Phillis to be performed by Mrs. Becceley.

Mrs. Sealand by Mrs. Clarkson.

Lucinda by Miss Hallam.

Isabella by Mrs. Rigby.

And the part of Indiana to be performed by Mrs. Hallam.

To which will be added the Ballad Farce called

DAMON AND PHILLIDA.

Arcas by Mr. Bell.

Ogon by Mr. Rigby.

Korydon by Mr. Clarkson.

Cymon by Mr. Miller.

Damon by Mr. Adcock.

Philida by Mrs. Becceley.

A new occasional prologue to be spoken by Mr. Rigby.

An epilogue (addressed to the ladies) by Mrs. Hallam.

Prices, box 8s. pit 6s. gallery 3s. No person whatever to be admitted behind the scenes. N. B. Gentlemen and ladies that choose tickets may have them at the new printing-office in Beaver Street*. To begin at 6 o'clock.

The days of performance were Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; and so continued for half a century. On the second night of performing the prices were announced as box 6s. pit 5s. gallery 3s.; and, towards the middle of October, the pit and gallery were reduced to 4s. and 2s.

It will be seen by the above bill that Sir Richard Steele was the first dramatist presented to the inhabitants of New-York. *The Conscious Lovers* is worthy of one of the authors of the Spectator, the coadjutor of Addison.

It appears that an accession had been made to the company. The names of Mr. Bell, Mr. Miller, and Mrs. Becceley, are not in the list of adventurers who embarked in the Charming Sally, Captain Lee. Besides these three performers, Mr. and Mrs. Love now made part of the company, and Mr. Hewlet. The latter was an apprentice to William Hallam of Goodman's Fields, and was sent out to the company as a dancer and violin-player. He was for many years the only dancing-master in New-York, and some of us *old fellows* remember the lessons and the steps taught by this worthy man, whose sons were the teachers of succeeding generations, and live in the memories of the middle-aged of New-York.

* This was the office of the Gazette, printed by Parker and Weyman.

On the 20th November the following curious note appeared on the play bills. "N. B. Gentlemen and ladies that intend to favour us with their company are desired to come by six o'clock, (we) being determined to keep to our hour ; as it would be a great inconvenience to them to be kept out late, *and a means to prevent disappointment.*" And on the 20th of December the bills gave notice that "nothing under the full price would be taken during the whole performance." It might be inferred from this notice that half price had been received heretofore ; or it may have been intended to prevent the disappointment of those who had been accustomed to admittance in London at half price after the third act.

The early history of our drama brings us in contact with the antiquities of our country, particularly of our cities, and we shall take occasion to describe their boundaries and point out their progressive extent and improvements as far as we may do so, without abandoning that branch of history assigned to us, or, as lawyers say, "travelling out of the record."

The theatre in Nassau Street was closed on the 18th of March, 1754, with *The Beggar's Opera* and *Devil to Pay*. The company had given one night's performance to the poor. The play was *Love for Love*, played to a full house with applause. The benefits commenced the latter part of January, 1754, and ended the 18th of March ; after which appeared the following notice :— "Lewis Hallam,

comedian, intending for Philadelphia, begs the favour of those that have any demands upon him to bring in their accounts and receive their money."

Taking it for granted that we can hardly be too particular in this part of our work, and that every thing connected with the introduction of the Drama into our country has become interesting in proportion as the traces of this commencement and early progress become dim and indistinct, we will give Mr. Hallam's account of the negociation of his father with the authorities and citizens of Philadelphia for permission to enact plays in their city.

Already had the religious toleration wisely and benevolently established by William Penn peopled his city with inhabitants of every sect and denomination. While Presbyterianism was intolerant and exclusive in the east, and Episcopacy in the south, Penn and Baltimore, the Quaker and the Roman Catholic, had opened Pennsylvania and Maryland as lands of refuge for liberty of conscience. The consequence was that the plain quaker colour made only a part of the garb of the citizens of Philadelphia even at this early period; but still drab was the livery of the majority. A large portion of the inhabitants, however, saw no offence to morality or religion in any of the colours which diversify and beautify the works of creation; or any of those innocent amusements which bring men together to sympathize in joys or sorrows, uniting them in the same feelings and expressions, with a brotherly consciousness of the

same nature and origin. Many, also, had been accustomed to the representations of the dramatists in their native land, and longed to renew the associations of their youth. Others, who had only read the works of Shakspeare, were anxious to experience the influence of the living personification of those thoughts and characters which had delighted them in the closet, and looked towards the sister and then secondary city of New-York with a strong desire to participate in her pleasures and advantages. These causes produced an application to the manager while the company were playing at New-York. Several gentlemen from Philadelphia urged Mr. Hallam to apply to Governor Hamilton for permission to open a theatre in that city, and pledged themselves for the success notwithstanding any opposition from the followers of Penn. They suggested that it would be best to make application for liberty to play for a few nights.

Hallam received these overtures with pleasure, and looked around upon his companions for a man fitted for the task of opening the way to so desirable an acquisition as this hitherto hostile city would be to the cause of the Muse. Such a pioneer and negociator needed address and talents, and we must suppose that Mr. Malone had evinced powers of persuasion, and possessed engaging manners or accomplishments superior to most of his fellows, as he was selected by the manager for the important and difficult mission.

The nature of the reward offered to induce Malone to undertake this *long journey*, and trust himself, face to face, with these broad-brimmed, brown-wigged Quakers in their own stronghold, lets us into some of the secrets of the green-room. "He undertook the business," says our informant, "on condition that, if successful, he should have for his reward the parts of Falstaff in *Henry the Fourth* and *The Merry Wives*, and of Don Lewis in *Love makes a Man, or the Fop's Fortune*.

At that period, and long since, the parts in which an actor was cast, if the manager's decree was confirmed by the public, became his inalienable property while in the company; and oftentimes the proprietor continued to figure as a youthful hero or lover long after all nature's qualifications for the parts had become the prey of time, the despoiler, and the wrinkles of age, and the cracked voice changed to "childish treble," should have consigned him to the representation of the lean and slippered pantaloon.

The tenacity of players is sometimes the subject of ridicule, and sometimes of surprise or wonder; but this will cease when we consider that the consequence or standing of the individual is estimated by the parts he plays, and that the good part marks and sometimes makes the good actor. We must also remember, that the salary, the share, and the benefit, may be measured by the cast of parts.

Malone willingly undertook the embassy, with the hope of attaining this brilliant accession to his theatrical property, but he experienced such a strenuous opposition, and found the strife with these disciples of peace so perilous, that he wrote for the manager to come to his assistance. The cry was "Hallam to the rescue!" The manager flew, as fast as mortals could then fly, to the assistance of his emissary. The relief was effectual, for "the king's name is a tower of strength," or was in those good old times. The manager found the city of brotherly love and passive peace divided into two hostile factions, as violent as the green and red of Constantinople, when charioteers shook the empire of the Cæsars to its foundation. Here it was not one colour against its opposite, but colours against colourless—the rainbow struggling through a cloud.

The Quakers and their adherents carried a petition to the governor for the prohibition of profane stage-plays. Counter-petitions were signed and presented, and finally the friends of action and passion prevailed, and the manager was favoured by Governor Hamilton with a permission to open a theatre, and cause twenty-four plays, with their attendant afterpieces, to be performed, on condition that they "offered nothing indecent and immoral," and performed one night for the benefit of the poor of the city—and further, that the manager gave security for all debts contracted, and all contracts

entered into by the company. How characteristic is all this of the time !

Such was the treaty by which the first histrionic adventurers gained a narrow and precarious footing in a new region which seemed forbidden ground. Once within the walls, they extended the boundaries of their conquest, not without opposition, until the whole city submitted to the invaders, who, by degrees, like the Tartar invaders of the Celestial empire, have become one and the same with the people they had conquered — not that the players became Quakers, but peaceable and good citizens, no longer living on sufferance, or obliged to give bonds for their good behaviour.

All this had occurred previously to the 18th of March, 1754, and a place been secured for the representation of plays in Philadelphia. Accordingly, the players proceeded thither, and commenced theatrical exhibitions. This was the first theatre opened in the capital of Pennsylvania by artists or actors by profession. As early as 1749, it is on record that the magistracy of the city had been disturbed by some idle young men perpetrating the murder of sundry plays in the skirts of the town, but the culprits had been arrested and bound over to their good behaviour, after confessing their crime, and promising to spare the poor poets for the future.

The first regular company of comedians opened their theatre, the store-house of Mr. William Plumstead, at the corner of the first alley above Pine

Street, and commenced playing in April, 1754, with the tragedy of *The Fair Penitent*. The place has since been occupied as a sail-loft, and the remains or traces of scenic decoration were to be seen within forty years. This was called the new theatre. The word "new" seems to have applied to all the places or buildings used by this company, although there had been no previous establishment of the kind. The prices of admittance were, box 6s.; pit 4s.; gallery 2s. 6d.

The company gained money and reputation, notwithstanding a continued and vigorous opposition. Pamphlets were published and distributed gratis during the whole theatrical campaign, and every effort made to show the evils attendant upon plays, and players, and play-houses; but Shakspeare and his followers prevailed. The tree was planted, and could not be rooted out. The effort of the wise should be to improve its fruit by cultivation, trimming, and grafting.

The Fair Penitent and *Miss in her Teens* were the first dramatic pieces presented to the inhabitants of Philadelphia; Nicholas Rowe and David Garrick, the first dramatists who spoke from the stage in the city of Penn. The tragedy was thus cast:—

Sciotto,	Mr. Malone.
Horatio,	Rigby.
Lothario,	Singleton.
Altamont,	Clarkson.
Calista,	Mrs. Hallam.
Lavinia,	Adcock.
Lucetta,	Miss Hallam.

The house was, as might be expected from the excitement, full to overflowing. In the course of the evening a great tumult was occasioned by the discovery of one of the unfriendly petitioners in the pit. He was considered as a spy, and peace was not restored until he was hustled out.

The governor added six nights to the twenty-four first granted to the players. Thus they held possession of the town until July, as their thirty nights, three in each week, occupied ten weeks.

In addition to the pleasure of success, the Thespians were gladdened by a visit from William Hallam, the father of the American stage, the original projector of this prosperous scheme. He landed in June, 1754. There is reason to believe that Lewis purchased all the property, interest, and good-will, from his brother William the original owner, as he returned to England immediately after a settlement of their accounts, and we hear no more of him.

Lewis, now not only manager, but sole proprietor, transported his company to the West Indies, and, dying in Jamaica, his widow married David Douglass, and placed him on the theatrical throne of the western hemisphere.

During the absence of the company in the West Indies, the theatre in Nassau Street, New-York, was taken down, and Douglass procured a building more accordant to his views to be erected for the reception of his company when they should return to that city. This building, the third theatre

erected in the United States, was on Cruger's wharf, between what are now called Old-slip and Coffee-house-slip. At that time the south-east side of Water Street was unbuilt, and the spot on which it stands was occupied by the tide-water. "Cruger's wharf" was the name given to a projecting block of buildings to the east of "Little Dock Street," bounded by the water, and having the water on each side, in what were called docks.

Douglass had built his theatre without obtaining permission from the magistracy to enact plays. This was a sad mistake, and no doubt offended dignity had determined before his arrival to punish him for neglecting those "boos" which the patron exacts from the patronized. The manager was made sensible of his neglect immediately upon his arrival in the autumn of 1758, for it would appear that until this time the Thespians were roving among the West India islands. On application for permission to perform plays, the "gentlemen in power" refused it.

Douglass made an appeal to the public in Gaine's Mercury of November 6th, stating that he had, "to his great mortification, met with a positive and absolute denial" when he "applied to the gentlemen in power for permission to play." He goes on to say that "he has in vain represented that such are his circumstances and those of the other members of the company, that it is impossible for them to move to another place; and, although in the humblest manner he begged the magistrates would in-

dulge him in acting as many plays as would barely defray the expences he and the company have been at in coming to this city, and enable them to proceed to another, he has been unfortunate enough to be peremptorily refused it. As he has given over all thoughts of acting, he begs leave to inform the public, that in a few days he will open a HISTRIONIC ACADEMY, of which notice will be given in this paper."

This was considered as an attempt to evade, or resist, the prohibition of the magistrates, and on the 8th of December Douglass found it necessary to deny all such intention, and concludes his apology thus: "The expense of our coming here, our living since our arrival, the charge of building, &c. amount to a sum that would swallow up the profits of a great many nights' acting, had we permission. I shall conclude with humbly hoping that those gentlemen who have entertained an ill opinion of me from my supposed presumption will do me the favour to believe that I have truly explained the advertisement, and that I am to them and the public a very humble and devoted servant." His explanation of his Histrionic Academy was, that he "proposed to deliver dissertations on subjects *moral, instructive, and entertaining*, and to endeavour to qualify such as would favour him with attendance *to speak in public with propriety*."

This man appears to have been by descent and education a gentleman. He afterward filled the office of one of his majesty's judges. He had failed

to bow the knee to power even before he had approached within its bounds, and he was thus made to lick the dust before a gracious permission was granted, to enlighten his judges, their satellites, and the people entrusted to their care, by the recitation of the pride of English poetry and wit.

Permission was at length obtained to perform thirteen nights, and the second theatre in New-York was opened with *Jane Shore*. Singleton's prologue was spoken by the second Lewis Hallam, then eighteen years of age; and an epilogue, written probably by Mr. Singleton, was delivered by Mrs. Douglass, Hallam's mother.

The epilogue, as marking the opposition which the theatre now had to sustain, and the degree of ability with which that opposition was met, and likewise the improvement of poet Singleton by his transplantation, shall be inserted here.

Much has been said, at this censorious time,
To prove the treading of the stage a crime.
Mistaken zeal, in terms not quite so civil,
Consigns both plays and players to the devil.
Yet wise men own a play well chose may teach
Such useful moral truths as churchmen preach;
May teach the heart another's grief to know,
And melt the soul to salutary wo.

So when the unhappy virtuous fair complains
In Shakspeare's, Lee's, or Otway's, moving strains,
The narrowest hearts expanded wide appear,
And soft Compassion drops the pitying tear.
Or would you warn the thoughtless youth to shun
Such dangerous arts as numbers have undone,
A Barnwell's fate can never fail to move,
And strike with shame and terror lawless love.

See, plunged in ruin, with a virtuous wife,
The Gamester weeps, despairs, and ends his life.
When Cato bleeds, he spends his latest breath,
To teach the love of country, strong in death.
With these examples and a thousand more,
Of godlike men who lived in times of yore,
The tragic Muse recalls this long-past age,
And brings heroic virtue, living, on the stage.

But when, to social gaiety inclined,
The comic Muse shall feast the cheerful mind,
Fools of all sorts, and fops a brainless crew,
To raise your mirth, we'll summon to your view;
Make e'en the coxcomb laugh to see his brother,
And one knave blush with shame to see another:
'Tis magic ground we tread, and at our call
Those sprites appear that represent you all.

Yet hold — methinks I hear some snarler cry:
“ Pray madam, why so partial — rat me — why
Don't you do justice on your own sweet sex?
Are there no prudes, coquettes, or jilts to vex?”
Granted — there are. For folly's not confined
To sex, it sways despotic all of human kind.
We frankly own — indeed we may as well —
For every fluttering beau we find a simpering belle.

But oft, above the pert, the dull, the vain,
The comic Muse exalts her moral strain;
To laugh at folly will not be confined,
But tries to mend as well as please mankind.
So when vile custom by false honour's breath
For one rash word would doom two friends to death,
Steele's moral Muse the impressive lesson shows,
Teaching the unhallow'd tyrant's will t' oppose;
Showing a Bevil, generous as brave,
Too wise to be insensate custom's slave,
Above the fear of death, but not above
The law of God, prescribing peace and love.

Thus human life's our theme — a fruitful field,
Of moral themes a plenteous store to yield —
Sages upheld our art in ancient time,
And to paint nature was not thought a crime;
For if the soul in virtue's cause we move,
The friends of virtue cannot disapprove —

We trust they do not, by the splendid sight
Of sparkling eyes that grace our scenes to-night.
Then bravely dare to assert the taste you've shown,
Nor be ashamed so just a cause to own ;
And tell our foes, what Shakspeare said of old
(Our former motto spoke it, I am told),
That here the world in miniature you see,
And all mankind are players as well as we.

The "former motto" alluded to was "*Totus Mundus aget Histrionem.*" Some one has paraphrased Shakspeare thus :—

"Yes, all the world's a stage, and full of cares,
And all mankind poor strutting, fretting players."

In the year 1759, David Douglass opened the second theatre in Philadelphia. It was situated at the south-west corner of Vernon and South Street, at a place formerly called "Society Hill."

Strictly speaking, this was the first theatre opened in Philadelphia or its suburbs, unless we call every place a theatre which is fitted up for the temporary exhibition of plays. This was, however, the first building erected as a theatre. The manager had cautiously taken his stand without the precincts of the city authorities, in what is called the Southern Liberties, but this did not prevent the revival of the civil strife of 1754. The Quakers and others arrayed themselves in opposition, and applied to Judge Allen (probably because the place was within the peculiar limits assigned to his rule, with denunciations of the players, and petitions that his power might be exerted for the putting

down of these intruders, these disturbers of the sleepy quiet of the formal city. The judge gave them an answer which must have been very unpalatable. Watson says he rejected the petition, and among other matter told the petitioners that "he had learned more moral virtue from plays than from sermons." What was the consequence? The playhouse was opened, and the wife of the judge fell sick and died. Such is the warning which tradition has handed down to us that wives may hereafter prevent their husbands giving countenance to theatres.

It is probable that Douglass, profiting by experience, had applied to Allen, and obtained his permission before he ventured to erect a theatre, thus avoiding the prohibition which had troubled him at New-York.

This temple of the dramatic Muse was, as may be supposed, an ordinary wooden building, and was afterward converted into three dwelling-houses, which are still standing at the corner of Vernon and South Street. The inhabitants of Philadelphia remember Mr. and Mrs. Douglass, Miss Cheer, and Miss Morris, as the most prominent performers of that day.

The easternmost boundary of the theatrical empire at this time was Newport, Rhode Island, where the next theatre was built. From Williamsburg to Newport the company ranged, occasionally playing besides at the cities of Annapolis, Philadelphia, and New-York, and in smaller places, where a

courthouse could be transformed to a playhouse, and scenes of imaginary heroic guilt be allowed to take the place of vulgar plebeian crime.

Perth Amboy, then the capital of the province of New-Jersey, and the residence of his majesty's governors, judges, treasurers, attorney-generals, and collectors, with a garrison usually of a regiment of foot, occasionally received the visits of the Thespians, and the writer has heard old ladies speak, almost in raptures, of the beauty and grace of Mrs. Douglass, and the pathos of her personation of Jane Shore.

In 1759 and long after, Newport, Williamsburg, Annapolis, and Perth Amboy, were places of comparative importance, now sunk into little more than villages, while neighbouring towns have sprung up, towering above them and overshadowing them, producing a sickly existence or absolute decay. A description of the first has been elegantly and truly given by the American novelist, James Fenimore Cooper, in his *Red Rover* — the health-inspiring garden of the north, where the southern planters, from the West Indies and the Carolinas, met in the great slave-market of the English provinces.

The Thespians did not visit New-York from 1759 to 1761, but, in the year 1760, Douglass built a larger theatre in Philadelphia, and, after giving a benefit at Society Hill for the college of the city, "for improving youth in the divine art of psalmody and church music," he opened the theatre in Southwark, which remained the only theatre of the

metropolis of Pennsylvania, until the building of the beautiful house in Chestnut Street, erected for Wignell and Reinagle in 1791, of which hereafter.

The house erected in 1760 was of sufficient size for the population at that time and long afterwards, and well adapted for theatrical representations. It was principally of wood, and painted red, without external decoration, and in its appearance no ornament to the city. It was partly burnt some years ago, and is now used as a distillery. Once pouring out a mingled strain of good and evil, it now dispenses purely evil. Yet distillers are not stigmatized in society.

This place was used for the exhibition of players, though not the performance of plays, as late as August, 1800, when Messrs. Hodgkinson and Barrett opened it with portions of plays, recitations, and music, for two nights.

In the beginning of August, 1761, "his honour the lieutenant-governor was pleased to give Mr. Douglass permission to build a theatre to perform in the ensuing winter," in the city of New-York. We lose sight of the theatre on Cruger's wharf, and a new house in Beekman Street was erected, and ready for opening on the 18th of November, on which night Rowe's *Fair Penitent* and Garrick's *Lethe* were performed. This, the third theatre erected in New-York, was situated a little below the junction of Nassau and Beekman Streets, on the south or south-west side of the latter street.

At this time the company came from Newport, Rhode Island, where they left a favourable impression, as appears by the following extract from *Gainé's Mercury* of November 9th, 1761. "Newport, November 3d. On Friday evening last, the company of comedians finished their performances in this town by enacting the tragedy of *Douglas* for the benefit of the poor. This *second* charity is undoubtedly meant as an expression of gratitude for the countenance and favour the town has shown them; and it cannot without an uncommon degree of malevolence be ascribed to an interested or selfish view, because it is given at a time when the company are just leaving the place, and consequently can have neither fear nor hope from the public. In return for this generosity it ought in justice to be told, that the behaviour of the company here has been irreproachable: and, with regard to their skill as players, the universal pleasure and satisfaction they have given is their best and most honourable testimony. The character they brought from the governor and gentlemen of Virginia has been fully verified, and, therefore, we shall run no risk in pronouncing 'that they are capable of entertaining a sensible and polite audience.'"

It appears from this, that the Thespians found foes among the slave-dealers of Newport, who probably thought a stage-player a greater abomination than the kidnapper, or receiver and abetter of the kidnapper, of the miserable negro. It likewise

appears that the actors carried and exhibited *a character* from place to place, vouching for their capability, and took care at this time to smooth their way in New-York by this commendation, republished from the Gazette of Newport. Notwithstanding this policy, a strenuous opposition was still made to the players, and permission was given to them at this time to perform only two months. They played twice a week. The house held £180 or 450 dollars. They calculated their average receipts at three hundred dollars, which, for the sixteen nights allowed them, gave four thousand eight hundred dollars. They stated the current expenses of the sixteen nights to amount to two hundred and fifty pounds, or six hundred and twenty-five dollars, (at 39 dollars 7 cents per night). The cost of the theatre was estimated at sixteen hundred and twenty-five dollars. By this we may judge of the size and elegance of the building, and compare it with the theatres of the present day. The cost of scenery and wardrobe was set down at four hundred pounds, or one thousand dollars; making the money expended amount to thirteen hundred pounds, or three thousand one hundred and fifty dollars, leaving a balance of six hundred and twenty pounds, or fifteen hundred and fifty dollars, to pay their individual expenses while in New-York, and their travelling charges. This curious statement and calculation was published by Douglass as an answer to an enemy who had

asserted in the journals of the day that the company would cost the city six thousand pounds.

Play tickets were advertised to be sold by Hugh Gaine, at the Bible and Crown. Box 8 shillings, pit 5 shillings, gallery 3 shillings. "The doors to be opened at four, and the play to begin precisely at six o'clock. No person to be admitted behind the scenes."

Many of our older citizens will remember Mr. Gaine with respect. He was Irish by birth, and rose to fortune, like Franklin, by industrious application to the type and the press. Industry does not always imply economy, but with this worthy man they went hand in hand, until wealth, their inevitable result, justified the assumption of a more swelling port. He was never ostentatious or prodigal, but ever liberal both of time and property for the service of the public, or of meritorious individuals. His business was attended to with the same punctuality, the same brown wig — such as we should look for in vain in these degenerate days — the same long-skirted brown coat, the same shrewdness and good humour, which had characterized him from early life. He printed and edited the newspaper called *The Mercury*, which had afterward the additional title of the *Weekly Gazette* for many years, conducting it through the war of the revolution under the auspices of the Bible and Crown. It is needless to say that in 1783 the crown fell, but the Bible continued as the sign of his

printing-office and book-store, in Hanover Square, now Pearl Street, near Wall Street, for many years after it had lost its companion. This separation betokened that of church from state, which is one of the safeguards of our liberty.

The old American company at this period, 1761, consisted of Messrs. Douglass, Hallam, (the second, his son-in-law), Allyn, Morris, Quelch, Tomlinson, Sturt, Reed, Tremaine, and Master A. Hallam; Mesdames Douglass, Morris, Crane, Allyn, and Miss Hallam.

The oppositionists continued their attacks through the medium of the public prints, and the players defended themselves by repeating their prologue and epilogue, revised by the author, and by acting a play for the benefit of "such poor families as are not provided for by the public."

The profit arising from the representation of *Othello*, after deducting the charges of the night, (exclusive of remuneration to actors, who all gave their services to appease opposition and feed the poor), was one hundred and fourteen pounds ten shillings, or two hundred and eighty-six dollars and a quarter. This sum was paid by Mr. Douglass to George Harrison, Esq. and Mr. John Vanderpiegle, who undertook the distribution of the charity.

The amount of the receipts on this occasion was one hundred and thirty-three pounds and sixpence, or three hundred and thirty-two dollars and fifty-

six cents. The account rendered by the manager of receipts and expenses is inserted as a curiosity.

		s.	£	s.	d.
Box tickets sold at the door,	116 at 8	-	46	8	
Pit	146	5	-	36	10
Gallery	90	3	-	13	10
Cash received at the doors				36	12 6
				<hr/>	
				£133 0 6	

CHARGES.

To candles, 26 lb. of spermaceti at 3s. 6d.	}	£5	5
. . . 14 lb. tallow 1s.			
To music, Messrs. Harrison & Van Dienvall at 36s.	3	12	
To the front door-keeper, 16s., stage door-keeper, 8s.	1	4	
To the assistants, 13s., bill sticker, 4s.		17	
To the men's dresser, 4s., stage keeper, 32s., drummer, 4s.		2	0
To wine in the second act, 2s. 6d.			2 6
To Hugh Gaine, for two sets of bills, advertise- ments, and commissions,		5	10
			<hr/>
			£18 10 6

Balance, £114 10s.

Notwithstanding the notification of "no person admitted behind the scenes," the disorderly and improper practice of permitting gentlemen to mingle with the actors and actresses behind the scenes, and even to show themselves on the stage, was common at this time, as is proved by the following public notice of Dec. 31st, 1761:—"Complaints having been several times made that a number of gentlemen crowd the stage and very much interrupt the performance, and as it is impossible the actors, when thus obstructed, should do that justice to their parts they otherwise would; it will be

taken as a particular favour if no gentleman will be offended that he is absolutely refused admittance at the stage-door, unless he has previously secured himself a place in either the stage or upper boxes." This is a picture of the state of things behind the scenes, which it is now scarcely possible to conceive. We know from the history of the English stage that such was the practice in London for many years*. On benefit nights, the stage would be nearly filled, the auditory seated so as to allow a small portion of the boards for the actors. The practice was abolished long before our first knowledge of theatres.

We cannot resist the temptation of inserting the benefit bill of the first actress in the country, and wife to the manager. Besides other customs of the time, the last paragraph shows the existence in Feb. 1762, the date of the bill, of a custom probably common in England at the time.

For the benefit of Mrs. Douglass, the tragical history of KING RICHARD THE THIRD, containing the distress and death of King Henry the Sixth in the Tower; the usurpation of the crown by Richard; the inhuman murder of the young King Edward the Fifth, and his brother the Duke of York; the fall of the Duke of Buckingham; the landing of the Earl of Richmond (afterwards Henry the Seventh) at Milford; the battle of Bosworth Field, and death of Richard, which put an end to the contention between the houses of York and Lancaster; with many other historical passages.

* In 1721, a riot was occasioned at Rich's theatre, by the insolence of the people of *quality* behind the curtain, which ended in a fight between the nobles and the players, and the final capture of the *men of condition*, and triumph of the actors.

King Richard, by Mr. Douglass;
 Richmond, by Mr. Hallam;

King Henry, by Mr. Allyn; King Edward the Fifth, by Master A. Hallam; Duke of York, by a young Master for his diversion; Duke of Buckingham, by Mr. Tomlinson; Lord Stanly, by Mr. Morris; Lieutenant of the Tower, by Mr. Sturt; Catesby, by Mr. Reed; Tressel, by Mr. Hallam; Dutchess of York, by Mrs. Crane; Lady Anne, by Mrs. Morris, and Queen Elizabeth, by Mrs. Douglass.

To which will be added, a dramatic satire called *LETHE*, with the additional character of Lord Chalkstone. Lord Chalkstone, by Mr. Allyn; *Æsop*, by Mr. Douglass; *Fine Gentleman*, Mr. Hallam; *Mercury*, Mr. Sturt; *Frenchman*, Mr. Allyn; *Charon*, Mr. Tomlinson; *Old Man*, Mr. Morris; *Mr. Tattoo*, Mr. Reed; *Bowman*, Mr. Tomlinson; *Drunken Man*, Mr. Hallam; *Mrs. Riot*, by Mrs. Douglass.

Tickets to be had of Mr. Gaine, printer, at the sign of the Bible and Crown, in Hanover Square, and of Mrs. Douglass, at her lodgings near the theatre, where places in the boxes may be taken. Box 8s., pit 5s., gallery 3s.

The ceremony of waiting on ladies and gentlemen at their houses with bills has been for some time left off in this company; the frequent solicitations on these occasions having been found rather an inconvenience to the person so waited on, than a compliment.

It is not only on the state of theatrical manners and customs that these notices from bills and advertisements throw light; we gain a peep at our long-buried ancestors of the colonies, which, aided by an active imagination, conjures up scenes of real life that otherwise would have slept in oblivion. We see the beaux of 1761, with their powdered wigs, long stiff-skirted coats and waistcoats, with flaps reaching nearly to the knees of their inexpressibles, their silk stockings, short-quartered shoes, and silver or paste buckles, crowding and ogling the actresses on the stage, having secured the box ticket for the purpose of gaining admis-

sion behind the scenes; the ladies in the boxes looking now on the actor, and now on a friend or brother by his side. And we see the actor or actress going from house to house, presenting benefit bills, and soliciting patronage—"rather an inconvenience to the person so waited upon."

The company finished their labours in New-York on the 26th of April, 1762, with a play for the benefit of the Charity School, and "a handsome sum was raised and delivered by Mr. Douglass to the churchwardens."

From this time until 1767 we have no documents of any special value relative to the state of the company, or the feelings of the people towards them. They went their rounds on the continent, and in the English West Indies.

The "troubles," however, which agitated the colonies, in consequence of the stamp-act, occasioned the destruction of the third New-York theatre. The arts can only be cherished in seasons of peace and prosperity. During the civil wars in England, the theatres were shut, and the players entered the king's army, in opposition to the republic. The republicans of New-York, in 1764, whether remembering the predilection of the actors for monarchy, or from other causes, determined to overthrow the play-house in Beekman Street, and a gentleman lately residing on Long Island, then a boy, told us that he was engaged in the work of destruction. He said that a number of persons assembled in a yard, or open space, opposite to

the theatre, in the evening, and set on the boys to commence the work, which, once begun, found hands enough to aid in it. Thus it appears that the first cloud portending civil war discharged its thunders on the temple of the Muses: the cloud passed off, and left the political horizon in a state of flattering calm and brightness — flattering because deceitful.

During this calm, Thomas Godfrey, of Philadelphia, the son of the inventor of the quadrant, in 1765, published a play called *The Prince of Parthia*, a tragedy, founded on, but deviating from history; whether intended for the stage, or only for the closet, is unknown. That it was not performed by the players is certain. This is the first American drama on record.

In 1767 we find further records of the dramatic Muse, which require a new chapter.

CHAPTER III.

Theatre in John Street, New-York — John Henry — Theatre in Albany — New-York Hospital — Doctor Cooper — First Theatre in Charleston. — The four Misses Storer — Miss Cheer — Congress recommends the closing of Theatres, or rather resolves to discourage extravagance and dissipation, and names Theatres as among the sources — The resolution communicated by Peyton Randolph — Wignell arrives — Antiquities.

IN the summer of 1767, the theatre in John Street, New-York, was built very much upon the plan of that in the Southern liberties at Philadelphia, already mentioned. It was principally of wood; an unsightly object, painted red. The situation of this house was on the north side of the street, nearly opposite to the present Arcade (1832). It was about 60 feet back from the street, having a covered way of rough wooden material from the pavement to the doors. There is reason to believe that at this time the dressing-rooms and green-room were under the stage, for, after the revolution, Hallam and Henry added on the west side of the building a range of rooms for dressing, and a commodious room for assembling previous to being called to *go on*. Two rows of boxes, with a pit and gallery, could accommodate all the play-going people of that time, and yield to the sharers eight hundred dollars when full, at the usual prices.

The stage was of good dimensions, as far as memory serves, equal to that of Colman's theatre, originally Foote's, in the Haymarket, London.

The John Street theatre was opened on the 7th of December, 1767, with Farquhar's lively and licentious comedy of *The Beaux' Stratagem*, which now cannot be tolerated, and Garrick's *Lethe*.

On this occasion, Mr. John Henry, long known as one of the firm of Hallam and Henry, and one of the best performers in the colonies, made his first appearance in America, in the character of Aimwell, and, judging from his appearance twenty years later, he must have been as handsome an Aimwell as ever trod the stage*. Henry, an Irishman by birth, had been liberally educated, and made his *debut* in London, under the patronage of the elder Sheridan, author of the once fashionable Pronouncing Dictionary, well known as an actor, and better known as the father of the author of *The School for Scandal*. The success of Henry on the London stage had not been sufficient to gain him a place among the successors of Garrick ; but to fail of success in London was the lot of Garrick on his first appearance, and afterwards Siddons experienced the same neglect.

* Carpenter, an English or Irish historian of the stage, with an accuracy similar to that of Burke, the Irish historian of Virginia, says that Hallam, the son-in-law and successor of Douglass, found Henry an actor at Drury Lane after our revolution, and entering into partnership with him, he made his first appearance in consequence of this arrangement, and of course after 1783.

The company was still Douglass's, but many changes had occurred. Many of the original adventurers, and even of their successors, had disappeared, and in their places on the play-bills we find the names of Messrs. Henry, Wall, Roberts, Greville, Wools, and Raworth, with Mesdames Harman, Wall, Cheer, Wainwright, Storer, F. Storer, and M. Storer. The last and first Miss Storer were afterward in turn Mrs. Henry, the youngest died first of the three, as Mrs. Henry ; and after Henry's death, the two elder sisters were known as Mrs. Mechler and Mrs. Hogg. Mrs. Storer and *four* daughters had joined the company in Jamaica ; the daughters were designated as Miss Storer, Miss Ann Storer, Miss Fanny Storer, and Miss Maria Storer. Henry married the eldest, but, during a voyage from Jamaica, the vessel in which she was a passenger, whether he was with her or not we know not, was burnt, and she with it. This accident took place on our eastern coast. The second sister, Ann or Nancy, was the mother of a son, borne to Henry, and afterwards captain of a ship. The third sister, Fanny, was afterwards Mrs. Mechler. Maria, the fourth sister, died Mrs. Henry. The second sister, Ann or Nancy, was afterward Mrs. Hogg.

This gives us a glimpse at the state of manners and morals among these teachers of virtue and morality, and such instances, even if rare, account for that repelling principle which keeps the cautious and the pure in private society aloof from those who delight them in public. Those who attract

public attention should be able to bear the scrutiny of the public. It is not players alone that are found wanting when weighed in the balance, and it is unjust to fix a stigma on a profession which appertains to an unworthy individual.

The name of Miss Cheer appears for the first time on occasion of opening the house in John Street. She played the part of Mrs. Sullen, and from this time shared the first rank of characters with Mrs. Douglass*.

The youngest Miss Storer possessed beauty and talent. She was, until the year 1792, the best public singer America had known. She played tragedy and comedy with spirit and propriety, although her figure was rather *petite* for the first, or for the elegant females of Congreve and Cibber.

Wools was for many years the first singer of the company, continuing to figure as such long after all voice had left him, and snuff and snuffle characterized his attempts.

We must be permitted to insert the bill for the opening of the theatre in John Street, a place which yet lives in the memories of some hundreds of the citizens of New-York.

“ By permission of his Excellency the Governor. By the American Company. At the theatre in John Street, this present evening, being the 7th instant, December, will be presented a comedy, called *The Stratagem*.

Archer, Mr. Hallam ; Aimwell, Mr. Henry ; Sullen, Mr. Tomlinson ; Freeman, Malone ; Foigard, Allyn ; Gibbet, Wools ; Scrub,

* We have before us a Philadelphia play-bill, in which Hallam is announced for Macbeth, and Miss Cheer as Lady Macbeth.

Wall; Boniface, Douglass; Dorinda, Miss Hallam; Lady Bountiful, Mrs. Harman; Cherry, Miss Wainwright; Gipse, Mrs. Wall; Mrs. Sullen, Miss Cheer. An occasional epilogue by Mrs. Douglass."

The afterpiece of *Lethe* gave Mr. Wools an opportunity of singing as Mercury, and a song in character was sung by Miss Wainwright. The bill concludes "*Vivant Rex et Regina.*"

On the 14th of December, nine chiefs of the Cherokee nation attended the theatre. *Richard the Third* was played for their edification, and the journal remarks that "they regarded the play with attention, but seemed to express nothing but surprise. *The Oracle* and *Harlequin's Vagaries* drew forth some proofs of their being diverted." Soon after, the bills announce that "the Cherokee chiefs and warriors, being desirous of making some return for the friendly reception and civilities they have received in this city, have offered to entertain the public with a war-dance;" and "it is humbly presumed that no part of the audience will forget the proper decorum so essential to all public assemblies, particularly on this occasion, as the persons who have *condescended* to contribute to their entertainment are of rank and consequence in their own country." How many reflections does this precious *morçeau* give rise to!—but the reader shall not be anticipated.

In December, the papers of the day announce that Mrs. Morris, of the theatre (together with her maid servant), was drowned in crossing the ferry at *Kill Vankeel*. The husband of the person here

mentioned appears to have joined the company in 1761; he is remembered as part of it until 1800. He was a low comedian, and played the old men of farce and comedy, when the shuffling gait and whistling treble, which time had forced upon him, were applauded as most exquisite imitations of old age, whose imperfections are ever the jest of the thoughtless vulgar. Those who can look back to 1788 will remember him a little shrivelled old man, with a voice palsied by years, having for his second wife a tall elegant woman, the favourite comedy lady, and the admiration of the public.

The first notice of a custom which prevailed within the remembrance of the writer is thus mentioned on a play-bill dated January 19, 1768. "Ladies will please to send their servants to keep their places, at four o'clock." From four until six and later, the front seats of the boxes were occupied by blacks of every age, waiting until their masters and mistresses made their appearance.

On the 16th of January, 1769, the theatre in John Street was opened, under the direction of Douglass, with *King John* and *The Old Maid*. The only new names in the bills are Byerly, Parker, and Darby.

The 17th of March, *The Busy Body* and *Brave Irishman* were announced to be performed by particular desire of the GRAND KNOT of the *friendly brothers* of St. Patrick. The charter song by Mr. Wools.

March 28. *The Tender Husband* and *Upholsterer* were advertised for “the entertainment of the R. W. Grand Master, the M. W. and brethren of the ancient and honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons.” To the bill was annexed the following invitation: “The company of *all the brethren* in town is earnestly requested to meet at Burn’s at 5 o’clock on the day of performance, and walk from thence in *procession* to the theatre, where the pit will be reserved for their accommodation.”

In the New York Journal of April 10th, we find *Othello* and *Hob in the Well* advertised — “the part of Othello to be attempted by a gentleman assisted by other gentlemen in the characters of the Duke and Senate of Venice, from a benevolent and generous design of encouraging the theatre, and relieving the performers from some embarrassments in which they are involved.”

Miss Wainwright, who appears to have been a principal comic actress, retired from the stage about this time, and Mrs. Douglass, who had, as Mrs. Hallam, been the heroine of Goodman’s Fields theatre in the time of Garrick’s first success and afterwards, and who, as we have seen, had been the favourite of the West Indian and North American colonists from 1752, was now declining in health, and approaching the final exit.

On the 19th of June, the theatre closed with the play of *Love for Love*, and, for the sixth time, *The Padlock*. Mr. Hallam, the son of Mrs. Douglass,

who, as we have seen, came from England with his parents at the age of twelve, was now the principal comedian and tragedian of the company. He ascribed his success to the instructions of Rigby, who was the first male player of the original band. In *The Padlock*, Mr. Hallam was unrivalled to his death, giving the Mungo with a truth derived from study of the Negro slave character, which Dibdin the writer could not have conceived.

Albany was visited by the servants of the Muses for the first time in July of this year; having gained permission "for one month only," from "his Excellency the Governor." On the 3d of July, 1769, the first play was performed in the city, now the seat of government of the great state of New-York. The entertainments were the tragedy of *Venice Preserved*, with a farce, and the price of admission, boxes 6s.; pit 4s.; gallery 2s. The days of playing, as everywhere else, were Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The company performed in the Hospital.

The last visit of Douglass and his company to New York seems to have been unfortunate, and the "embarrassments" above alluded to probably deterred them from a visit to John Street for some months. They had other homes, and Philadelphia was one of the best, though the island of Jamaica was the warmest. We find them in Annapolis, in 1772, where the reader will recollect that the first theatre was built, and *that* a brick building, whereas no other was erected of more

permanent materials than wood, until the Chestnut Street Philadelphia theatre was built forty years after it.

In the Maryland Gazette of 1772, we see " By authority. By the American Company. On Tuesday, Sept. 1st. The theatre will be opened with a comedy written by Hugh Kelly, author of *False Delicacy*, &c., called *A Word to the Wise*." On this occasion we find, for the first time, the names of Messrs. Goodman and Johnson, and Mrs. Morris, the actress mentioned above as Mr. Morris's second wife.

Scenery is for the first time particularly announced. We have reason to believe that the department of the Drama which depended upon the painter had not hitherto created much of illusion, or even sensation. On this occasion the bills say, " with a new set of SCENES, painted by Mr. Richards of London." It is reasonable to conclude, that, as Annapolis saw the first theatre in America, she likewise saw displayed the first well painted set of scenery. There appears to have been no gallery in the Annapolis theatre, as the prices given are " Boxes 7 shillings and 6 pence, pit 5 shillings." We notice another circumstance, which is the first mention made of a box book. It is in these words: "Places in the boxes to be had at the theatre, where a book is kept for that purpose."

The usual routine of playing and travelling, from the North American colonies to the West

Indies and back again, occupied the Thespians without leaving any memorable trace until the year 1773, when, on the 14th of April, Douglass opened the theatre in New-York, giving notice that it would be impossible to keep it open "longer than the end of May." It will be seen that the time was extended to August, from which we may conclude that the company was more successful than at their last visit.

On the 3d of May, the manager threatened the gallery gods that if they did not behave better he would expel them from Olympus. "The repeated insults," he says, "which some mischievous persons in the gallery have given, not only to the stage and orchestra, but to the other parts of the house, call loudly for reprehension:" he then goes on to say, that unless this is amended, "the gallery for the future will be shut up." In this same month appeared Dryden's alteration of Shakspeare's *Tempest*, to which no other term will apply than that of a profanation — and yet it is still played, and still applauded.

About this time died Mrs. Catharine Maria Harman, of the American Company, a granddaughter of Colley Cibber, the poet laureate, the hero of Pope's *Dunciad*, the author of *The Careless Husband*, and of the most amusing work on his profession ever written, for he was likewise a player, and a very good one. His autobiography is unrivalled. Mrs. Harman is recorded as a just

actress and an exemplary woman — “sensible, humane, and benevolent.”

This summer, several appearances of “gentlemen” in various characters diversify the bills, and on the 26th of July the tragedy of *George Barnwell* and the farce of *The Padlock* were performed, “as a support to the Hospital *about to be erected*.” The following N. B. was added to the bill.

“It is hoped that all who are charitably disposed, or wish well to so laudable and useful an undertaking, will countenance this play with their presence, or otherwise contribute their mite towards so good a work as providing a receptacle for the sick and needy. It is hoped by the friends of the Hospital, that the moral of the play to be acted will have some influence with those who are otherwise no friends to the theatre.”

The Reverend Dr. Cooper, provost of King's (now Columbia) College, wrote the following prologue for the occasion, which was spoken by Mr. Hallam. The doctor, it will be seen, makes the players pledge themselves to support a moral stage. I fear that this was not always remembered; and managers and actors are too apt to lay the “flattering unction to their souls” which David Garrick provided for himself and them, that “they who live to please must please to live.” The stage, however, became more and more cleansed from “the artful hint” and the “thoughts that modesty need blush to hear,” which the writer of the verses makes the speaker, for his companions, disclaim. And inasmuch as the wise and the good countenance the Drama, wisdom and morality must take the place of the “ribald page” of former times.

Prologue, written by the Rev. Dr. Cooper, on the occasion of a play being performed to assist in building the New-York Hospital.

With melting breast the wretch's pangs to feel,
His cares to soften or his anguish heal,
Wo into peace by pity to beguile,
And make disease, and want, and sorrow, smile;
Are deeds that nobly mark the generous mind,
Which swells with liberal love to human kind,
And triumphs in each joy to others known,
As blissful portions added to his own.

Small though our powers, we pant with honest heart
In pity's cause to bear a humble part;
We gladly give *this night* to aid a plan
Whose object's charity and good to man.

Patrons of charity! while time endures,
Be every bliss of conscious virtue your's!
The hoary father, snatch'd from want and pain,
Oft to his consort and his youthful train
Shall praise the hand that rais'd his drooping head,
When every hope, when every friend, had fled,
That rais'd him, cold and naked, from the ground,
And pour'd the healing balsam in his wound,
With kindly art detain'd his parting breath,
And back repell'd the threat'ning dart of death.
The plaintive widow, shedding tears of joy,
As, fondly watching o'er her darling boy,
Her anxious eyes with keen discernment trace
The dawn of health relumining his face,
Shall clasp him to her breast with raptures new,
And pour the prayer of gratitude for you.
In you, the long lost characters shall blend
Of guardian, brother, father, husband, friend!
And sure if bliss in mortal breast can shine,
That purest bliss, humanity! is thine.

Let not mistaken avarice deplore
Each mite diminish'd from his useless store;
But tell the wretch — that liberal acts bestow
Delights which hearts like his can never know;
Tell — for you feel — that generous love receives
A double portion of the joy it gives,

Beams o'er the soul a radiance pure and even,
And antedates on earth the bliss of Heaven.

This night, to youth, our moral scene displays
How false, how fatal, are the wanton's ways;
Paints her alluring looks, fallacious wiles,
And the black ruin lurking in her smiles;
Bids us the first approach of vice to shun,
And claims a tear for innocence undone.

While scenes like this employ our humble stage,
We fondly hope your favours to engage;
No ribald page shall here admittance claim,
Which decency or virtue brands with shame;
No artful hint that wounds the virgin's ear,
No thought that modesty would blush to hear;
We ask no patronage — disclaim applause —
But while we act and speak in virtue's cause.
This is our aim — and while we this pursue,
We ne'er can fail of patronage from you.

Hallam had now succeeded Rigby both as first player and as speaker of prologues, and added besides the best parts in farce and the holiday magician, Harlequin. The only new name added to the *dramatis personæ* this season is that of Blackler.

In August the theatre closed in New-York with Goldsmith's new comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*, and the company went to Annapolis, and thence to Philadelphia, where Mrs. Douglass (the mother of Mr. Hallam and Mrs. Mattocks) died.

This summer, the first theatre was built in Charleston, South Carolina, Douglass having gained permission from the magistrates and being invited by the inhabitants. In September he went thither, and the company followed him. They played fifty-one nights in that city, closing the campaign in June, 1774.

Hallam, Miss Hallam, and Wools, proceeded from Charleston to London, and the remainder of the company arrived in New-York, intending to open the theatre in the fall; but the Provincial Congress had met in Philadelphia, and, not seeing in a company of English players from the Theatres Royal fit instruments to second the cause of American liberty, or wishing to turn the attention of mankind to something more immediately necessary in their opinion to the welfare of the colonies than any branch of the fine arts, they recommended a suspension of all public amusements. Their recommendation was a law to those who looked up to them as the assertors of their rights; the theatres were closed, and the Thespians embarked for the more loyal colonies of the English West Indies.

It was on the 24th of October, 1774, that the first Congress passed the above resolution or recommendation. They agreed to discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation; and among others named "gaming, cockfighting, exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments"—a strange medley! plays ranked with cockfighting and gambling, and these last only censured because expensive. This resolution of Congress was conveyed to Douglass in a letter from the president, Peyton Randolph; and the committee of New-York gave him likewise notice of the same.

Wignell, so well known afterwards throughout the continent, had been sent out by his cousin Hal-

lam, on his arrival in London, and reached New-York the day before the news of the recommendation of Congress found its way to that city. He was sitting under his hairdresser's hands, when it was made known that all the theatres on the continent were virtually closed by this recommendation. Of course he only joined the company to aid in their West India campaign, and remained unknown to North America until after she had become an independent nation.

Before commencing a new chapter, let us take a view of the boundaries, and note some of the antiquities, if any thing in this new world of European colonization can deserve the name, of two or three of our principal cities.

It is very difficult for one who remembers our cities, or indeed our country generally, as it was before the revolution, to conceive that the time which has since elapsed could have produced the immense changes which every where appear. Our cities are so dissimilar that we look for causes adequate to such effects. We find them in our republican institutions, and in the federal union which has given them stability. Before the revolution, Boston was, in the eyes of Europe, America. Greatly as Boston has increased and improved, and deservedly ranking for intelligence with the most favoured places in either hemisphere, she now holds but a third place in the scale of political importance among the cities of the United republic. When she placed herself in the front of battle, an

received, as she had provoked, the first blow in defence of the rights of Americans, the splendid bridges and magnificent causeways which connect the city with the surrounding main land had no existence. Beacon Hill towered above the town, which meandered in crooked streets around its base, from *the neck* to *north end*, and looked over it on the beautiful bay to the east ; Charlestown lay to the north ; and upon the *common* were some straggling houses and rough fields or waste lands ; to the south-west and west, the town and hills of Roxbury. The hill has vanished ; the fields are thickly covered with houses like palaces ; the *common* remains a beautiful lawn, on two sides bordered by the Mall, the finest public walk, in some respects, which we know in America, and which was commenced by the troops of Great Britain, when Gage defied the assembling bands of militia, who took post on the surrounding heights of Roxbury and Cambridge. The English general thought he was forming a pleasure-walk for the future subjects of his and his master's government. But a few years since, perhaps now, the excavation from which the gravel was taken to raise and level the Mall was seen, and the faint traces of the wheels on which it was borne from the west side of the common. The noble trees, under whose shade we have seen the ancient and honourable, and Sargeant's light infantry, and other corps of militia, the best disciplined in the world, perform their military evolutions, were planted by the mercena-

ries who were expected by the parliament of England to march triumphantly over the fields and corpses of Americans, from one end of the continent to the other. The paltry buildings, which then served for Adams and Hancock to display their eloquence in, have given place to edifices such as did not then exist, even in the imaginations of the sober townsmen. But Boston, as it then existed, does not perhaps fall within the province of the historian of the American theatre, for it was not until some years after the revolution that an institution of that nature was permitted to occupy a place within its limits, except when occupied by a hostile army.

Newport, as it existed before the year 1775, before Providence became the metropolis of the state of Rhode-Island, is described by James Fenimore Cooper in his charming romance of *The Red Rover*—the slave-market of the West Indies and the southern colonies, and the summer resort of the planters who sought health and pleasure in the breezes of the north, and profit in the forced labour of the African. One of its antiquities has occupied some attention, and is made by the novelist the scene of several incidents belonging to his plot. The conjectures respecting this object of antiquarian research remind the writer of a discovery of this nature made by him on his first visit to the city of Hudson. According to his custom, he had gone straight forward from the landing-place to the highest ground he could perceive within his reach—

a hill behind the town. There, after admiring the Catskill mountains, the magnificent river, and all the varied landscape below and around, his attention was arrested by a number of large blocks of stone, placed circularly on the summit of the hill. Conjecture and imagination were instantly hard at work. No other stones were near. These must have been brought thither from a distance and with much labour, probably by the aborigines. Probability was very soon certainty. It must have been a rustic altar. No doubt they here offered to the great spirit the first fruit of their maize fields, or of their hunting. Imagination pictured their figures, as they danced round this hallowed circle, their ceremonies, their sacrifices, perhaps of human victims taken in war. Filled with these images, the traveller returned to the town, and from the heights real and imaginary descended to the inn, and mixed with every-day beings. But the Indians, and the important if not magic circle, were uppermost in his thoughts, and an opportunity was sought and found to speak of it to an elderly gentleman of the town, who had been occupied by the newspaper. He listened—inquired the spot—was told.—“Oh, on the hill! ah, where the old windmill used to stand.” Never was imagination more quickly put to flight by reality. All was plain without further inquiry. The altar or temple, the scene of so many sacred rites and solemn sacrifices, was the foundation of an old windmill. The reader will remember Oldbuck and Edie Ochil-

tree. We have travelled out of the record, but return to Newport. The theatre of this pleasantly situated town was an apartment over the market-house, and, as all that is metropolitan tends to the seat of commerce up the river, no other temple had been dedicated to the Muse in Newport.

Baltimore must be left for consideration at a period subsequent to the war of independence, for the same reason that Boston is reserved; and we must refer the reader to Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia* for the antiquities of that city. This gentleman has been indefatigable in his research, and has preserved from oblivion very many valuable facts, and descriptions of buildings as they existed in former times, which but for him would have been lost. In a manuscript diary of a citizen of New-York, written when on a visit to Philadelphia in the winter of 1793-4, I find this memorandum: "This day visited Bush Hill. During the late dreadful fever, this place was occupied as an hospital for the infected. It is now inhabited by French fugitives from St. Domingo. The house and grounds are all in ruins, though evidently once a very delightful country residence. Many of the bedsteads used for the unhappy citizens who were conveyed hither from their homes were standing by the door. The committee took forcible possession of this house as a proper place for the purpose or use intended. Two of the committee of health distinguished themselves in a remarkable manner. At a time when no attendants or nurses could be pro-

cured, and the miserable subjects of this pestilence were dying hourly in the hospital, Peter Helmes and Stephen Girard went thither, and officiated night and day in the lowest and most disgusting offices both to dead and dying. These men are now alive." Let us add, that Stephen Girard lived until 1832, the richest man in the United States, and, with the same benevolence which guided him in 1793, left his immense property for the promotion of human happiness.

Another extract from the above diary may be acceptable. "Visited the stranger's burying-ground, called Potters' Field, and saw the manner of burying the dead during the fever. The graves were dug in rows, very deep and large, and four bodies deposited in each. Some of these pits are open, being a surplus, which gave me an opportunity of judging of their size. They were scarcely a foot asunder, and I computed that in that field alone upwards of 1800 persons were interred. It was a melancholy scene. I looked with peculiar emotion on one of the carts then employed in conveying the dead bodies." The traces of this cemetery have long disappeared. In the midst of the beautiful city, a square full of life gives no indication of the mansions of the dead by pestilence. Washington Square in New-York is another instance of the abode of death being changed to a source of life and pleasure.

In Watson's work above-mentioned are notices of New-York, but as the writer, who now wishes to

occupy the reader's attention, has been familiar with the latter city from childhood, he detects errors in what Mr. Watson has gleaned from the memories of others, and thinks he shall do more service to the searcher into such reminiscences of the past by giving his own recollections, than by adopting those of any other if in contradiction to them. Besides, we are now to consider New-York as it existed from 1767 to 1774.

It will be recollected that the second theatre built in New-York was situated on Cruger's wharf. It was built in 1758. The place called Cruger's wharf appears, by a map of the city published in 1767, to have been a block projecting into the harbour, having the water of the bay on each side, and being based upon Little Dock Street, now that part of Water Street between Coenties-slip and Old-slip. We will proceed along what is called the East river, and go northward and eastward. The portion of Water Street between Old-slip and Coffee-house-slip was unbuilt on its east side, the water occupying the space. From the Coffee-house-slip to Fly or Vly Market-slip, or Long Island ferry, that which is Water Street now was called Burnet Street. It was built on both sides, and had a block somewhat similar to Cruger's wharf projecting into the harbour. Having crossed Fly Market-slip, we find a similar projection serving as the foundation and continuation of Water Street to Burling-slip, from whence, as we go north-east, the water occupied the east side

of Water Street, except as piers or wharfs projected into it. That part of Water Street which was then so called commenced at Peck's-slip, extending eastward till intersecting Cherry Street, which last terminates at what was afterward New-slip, but then was the commencement of "the ship-yards."

Having travelled by the edge of the harbour on the east side of the town as far as it extended, we will return to our starting place on Cruger's wharf, and proceed south-west, on which side we find the tide-water flowing up to what is now Pearl Street, and a long pier projecting into it. South-west of this pier were two basins, called east and west dock. Further on was a small block, which was separated from the battery by Whitehall-slip.

The battery, occupying the low point of the island, was founded on rocks, whose black faces appeared between the ramparts and the water, except at very high tide. This rocky margin was continued round the point to the commencement of Broadway at the same spot where it now commences. Number one, Broadway, was long known as Kennedy's house. Opposite to this well known house, still standing but much enlarged, was an open space, which was afterward enclosed with iron railing, and called the Bowling-Green. In this enclosure until 1776 stood an equestrian statue, of lead, gilt, of the king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, erected on occasion of the repeal of the stamp act. South of this place stood, on a com-

manding eminence, Fort George, which overlooked the Battery and the beautiful bay, and overhung the little narrow street called Pearl Street, which has given its name to what was once Dock Street, Hanover Square, Queen Street, and Magazine Street; like Aaron's rod, swallowing up all the serpent rods of the Egyptian Magi, all as crookedly serpentine as itself. The governor's house and garden were within the precincts of the fort, where were quarters or barracks for soldiers. Pearl Street in 1767 extended only from the Battery to Whitehall: following that line now so called, first came Dock Street to Old-slip, then Hanover Square to Coffee-house-slip, and then Queen Street, ending in Chatham Road or Row. This was a row on the east side of what is now Chatham Street; the west or north-west side was open, from where Pearl Street now crosses Chatham to the old jail, lately metamorphosed into a Grecian temple. This open space was occupied by a rough bank and a hill called Windmill Hill.

Nearly opposite the place where Queen Street ended in Chatham Road was the celebrated tea-water pump, from which the inhabitants were supplied by carts carrying casks, and attended by men and women, who distributed fresh water as regularly as now milk is dealt out. The inhabitants then kept their cows in the town, and cowherds received them in the morning and drove them to pasture, returning them in due time in the evening. The cow-pastures were on the east, upon a line

with the present Grand Street, on the west, as low down as the Hospital. Behind the tea-water pump was situated the fresh water, or Kolk, or Collect, extending to the vicinity of Bayard's mount, afterward called Bunker Hill. This was a high and commanding sugar-loaf-shaped hill, situated on the north side of the present Grand Street, and west of Mott Street. To the east of Chatham Row the town was partially built on low swampy ground, intermingled with water to the ship-yards.

The Bowery, or Boston road, the only avenue to the city, began as now, but there were only a few houses beyond the tea-water pump on that side. Farm-houses and gardens here commenced. To the east, and near the ship-yards, on the brink of a steep bank, a cemetery for the Jews was walled in. Their synagogue was in Mill Street, near Broad Street.

We will return, if the reader is not tired, to the commencement of Broadway at Kennedy's house. Behind this and several of the adjacent houses, as we proceed up the street, were gardens whose walls rested on the beach, and were washed by the tide-water of the harbour, here called the North or Hudson's River. Where Trinity Church now stands, a temple more purely Gothic in its architecture, and decorated with sculptured angels within its walls, reared its tall spire. On the site of Grace Church stood the Lutheran Church. Proceeding up Broadway the buildings were mean until we came to St. Paul's Chapel, and beyond that were two

two-story brick houses, beyond which were public houses, gardens, fields, orchards, and swamps.

To the west of Broadway were streets bearing the names of Rector, Thames, Crown, Courtlandt, Partition, Vesey, Barclay, and Reed, the two last partly built; these streets ran to Greenwich Street, or rather to the wharfs and water, which then occupied its place. Warren and Reed Streets were very narrow and ill-built, with here and there a house. The Hospital was built between the years 1773 and 1775; since enlarged. King's College was a part of what is now Columbia College. The place now the Park was an open ground, called the Common. The Jail and Bridewell fronted on it.

We will now go south again, to the commencement of Broad Street at the water. Here were the east and west dock, the Albany pier and bason. Here stood the Merchants' Exchange, a brick building, open below. A bridge or planked walk extended from this place, where merchants congregated, up the street, covering a sewer, where formerly the dock let in the tide, which had once flowed up to above Garden Street, where stood the ferry-house immortalized in Cooper's *Water-Witch*, by the pen of genius, patriotism, and benevolence.

This street had many of the true Dutch houses, with the gable-ends for fronts, and at its head stood the City Hall, part court-house, part jail, on the spot where afterwards Federal Hall stood, and projected beyond the present Custom House.

The old Federal Hall is memorable as the seat of the first Congress under our constitution, and the place where Washington, in presence of the people assembled in Wall and Broad Streets, and the Senate and members of the House of Representatives surrounding him, standing in the balcony in all the simplicity of republicanism, took the oath as first president of the United States of America.

The front of this building projected into Wall Street, which, commencing as now at Broadway, ended at the Coffee-house-slip. The Coffee-house was at the corner of the slip and Burnet Street.

From the Old-slip ran Smith Street to Wall Street, where Pitt's statue stood, erected by the gratitude of the colony after the repeal of the stamp act. The street continued thence under the name it now bears, of William Street, terminating in Queen Street, and forming the string of an irregular bow.

From the Fly or Vly Market, Maiden Lane commenced, exceedingly narrow, and having, like all the other streets at that time, the gutter or kennel in the middle. Maiden Lane widened as it went west to Broadway, and sent off a branch called Crown Street, now Liberty, at the corner of which and Nassau stood the old Dutch Church, on the spot occupied in 1753 by the first theatre.

Nassau Street began obscurely at the back of the City Hall, with a narrow passage into Wall Street, and continued northward to Chatham Row.

John Street began, as now, in Broadway, and was lost in a narrow lane called Golden Hill, which descended precipitously to Queen Street, opposite Burling-slip.

The Fly Market, as we have seen, stood at the east end of Maiden Lane ; at its west end, touching on Broadway, stood the Oswego Market ; at its south side were some hovels and dram-shops. The Bear Market stood on what is now Greenwich Street, in front of the present Washington Market.

We have seen that the Jail and Bridewell fronted on the Common. Behind these buildings, to the north, were barracks for soldiers, and then the ground descended in rough unseemly sort to water and swamp ; and on a kind of islet stood the Powder Magazine, which, when the place was filled up and a street built, gave it the name of Magazine Street, now a part of Pearl Street.

North of the Bridewell and Jail was the place of execution. As late as 1782-3, the effigies of two German officers were there suspended on a gallows, the originals of the portraits having deserted to the rebels.

Here close we our notes of New-York before the revolution. If any reader has accompanied the author, let him look abroad on what it now is — and think.

CHAPTER IV.

1776. Recollections of New-York during the War of the Revolution — Military Thespians at Boston — Burgoyne's second Drama — A Cure for the Spleen — Theatre Royal, New-York — Captain Stanley's Prologue — Tragedy of Douglas — Names of the Performers of the British Army — Theatre in Philadelphia — Advertisement for Ladies — Theatre Closed.

NEW-YORK, during the revolutionary war, is fully within the recollection of the writer. It will be remembered that when Washington withdrew his undisciplined army from the city, after their defeat at Brooklyn, having with consummate skill crossed the sound called the East river, he led the yet unmanageable mass of citizen-soldiers beyond the reach of the enemy, and they saw the city they had left enveloped in flames, as they turned their eyes to the homes upon which many looked back for the final adieu.

The conflagration, which raged unchecked on the night the English troops first took their quarters in New-York as an enemy's city, destroyed all the buildings, with very few exceptions, from the lower part of Broadway, on the west side, to Trinity Church, that beautiful Gothic edifice included; and then, leaving the street, continued its ravages between it and the river until nearly in the rear of St. Paul's Chapel.

On the eastern side of Broadway, the same devastation spread from nearly opposite the site of Grace Church, southward, then occupied by the Lutheran Church, which had escaped the flames, to serve the royalists for a store-house. The fire only stopped after destroying all between Broadway and the water to the south-east, and on the east to Broad Street, including a part of the west side of that street in its ruinous march. Thus a great portion of what was then New-York was left for years a mass of black, unsightly rubbish.

During the war, another fire added all the east side of what was then called Great Dock Street (now Pearl), and a great part of Little Dock Street (now Water Street), to the ruins. The walls and chimneys left by the first mentioned fire served the lowest followers of the army for shelter, by the aid of refuse boards, half-burned beams, poles, and pieces of sail-cloth, and the filthy congregation of vile materials went by the name of Canvass-town. This place of refuge for drunkenness, prostitution, and violence, was the resort of the sailors from the ships-of-war in the harbour, of Negroes who fled from the neighbouring provinces, and others brought from the south by the troops in their southern expeditions. Canvass-town was the Wapping, the St. Giles's, and the Five Points, of the desolated garrisoned city.

To the south of this scene of ruin and abomination, Pearl Street, consisting of some of the two-story houses yet remaining, escaped the conflagration.

gration. Pearl Street extended originally, and at that time, only from the Battery to Whitehall Street. Fort George, on the north, overlooked the houses of Pearl Street. A few houses remained at the south extremity of the west side of Broadway; the last and largest, then called Kennedy's house, was the residence of the British commanders-in-chief. Between these houses and the North river there were no buildings, and the waves washed the walls of their gardens.

On the eastern side, the city extended from the ruins caused by the fire to the New Slip; then commenced the ship-yards. Front Street and South Street were then water or wharfs.

On the west side of the city, we have seen that the first great fire stopped its destructive progress on the side of Broadway nearest the river, after devouring Trinity Church; and the portion of the street between that church and St. Paul's was spared; most of the houses were, however, small and poor. There existed no brick houses beyond St. Paul's Chapel, except two two-story buildings, since enlarged to three stories; beyond, to the north, were wooden houses, inhabited by those who were allied in theory and practice to the inmates of Canvass-town, excepting two public-houses, one having a billiard-table in its front apartments, and behind it the Five-alley, made notorious, not to say famous, as the daily resort of Sir Henry Clinton and his *cortége*. The commander-in-chief, we presume, after the hour of morning business, was seen

galloping from head-quarters, near the fort, up Broadway, to this Five-alley, and, after exercising there, he again mounted and galloped, like a sportsman at a fox-chase, out of town and in again, followed at full speed by his aids and favourites. There was another Five-alley in John Street, near Broadway, on the same side with the theatre.

Beyond the town, and elevated above it, stood, where it still stands, with many additions and improvements, that Hospital to which the Thespians of the American Company contributed their labours ; and, in the outskirts of the city, the college, since enlarged, where the writer of the prologue spoken on that occasion, Dr. Cooper, presided as provost. Mr. Hugh Gaine, who as usual sold the tickets for the play, was for many years one of the worthy governors of the charitable institution for which the comedians and the provost laboured.

That triangular space now called the Park, and so ornamental to the southern division of the city, was then beyond its northern limits, except that the Bridewell frowned on the base of the triangle to the west, and the Jail, then called the provo, where American prisoners suffered for asserting the rights of their country, scowled on the east. This place held in confinement but a small portion of the miserable prisoners of war. The prisonships, those charnel-houses of the living, had a greater share in the human victims, and the sugar-house in Crown Street (now Liberty) might be seen, every window filled with heads, thrust one above

another to the top of the scanty aperture, to catch a portion of the blessed air of heaven, which could not find place to circulate within the massive walls and among the throng of miserable victims. The old Dutch Church, adjoining this abode of wretchedness, was occupied as a riding-school for the dragoons, and had been used as a prison. This little portion of the globe (the site of the church), had been used and abused as a play-house, a church, a riding-school, and a prison, all within the space of one-fourth of a century. The Brick Church was the only building in Chatham Row, except those described as the nuisances of the other side of the open space, called the Fields, and of Canvass Town. The above-mentioned space was a shapeless void, its surface undulating with hillocks of filth.

Where that building known as the Alms-house, Museum, Academy of Arts, and finally converted by legislative magic into part and parcel of the City Hall, now stands, then stood a range of soldiers' barracks, looking down upon an open and desolate space descending to the Collect. The mass of mud and water which was known by that name extended from that part of Pearl Street, not long since called Magazine Street (from a powder-magazine which stood there in former days) to that part of Canal Street which intersects Broadway, then and there called the new road. The waters of the Collect communicated with those of the low grounds on the other side of the road, called Lisenard's meadows, under a bridge, and the skaters

of that day passed at will from one collection of waters when frozen to the other, i. e. from Pearl Street (as now called), to the sand beach of the North river, between Lispenard's mansion and the public gardens and house of Brennon, long known afterward as a place of entertainment kept by Tyler, for years an important member of the dramatic corps, and more recently by Hogg, another well known Thespian. Some are now living here, and the writer among the number, who remember the present king of England, then a midshipman, essaying very awkwardly to skate, supported by generals, admirals, and their supporters, on the broad expanse of water which then in winter covered that ground, now covered by houses and churches, and a population of thousands then unborn.

To the north of the waters of the Collect rose a pyramidal hill, which overlooked the city and its beautiful bay, and which, if now standing, would be the finest spot that exists, next to Edinburg or Naples, from which to sketch a panorama. Its earth has since served in part to fill the cavities near it, and transform the waters to dry land; and its site and miles beyond it are now loaded with brick and stone, and filled with the busy hum of men.

The Bowery, that noble street, was then the Bowery Road, and the only avenue from the city to the country. On each side were meadows and orchards.

The new road, now Broadway, stopped at the gardens which surrounded what has since been called the Sailor's Snug Harbour, then the country-seat of Andrew Elliot, Esq. At another spot, now the corner of Leonard Street and Broadway, stood a house and gardens, the rural retreat of our citizens, called, from a retreat of the kind near London, the White Conduit House; it has been since called Mount Vernon Gardens, and had, as will be seen, a theatre attached to it, the remains of which were visible within seventeen years. Nearly opposite, on the other side of the new road, were the remains of aqueducts and reservoirs begun some time before 1775, for the purpose of raising water from the Collect, the pond below, and to the east, before-mentioned, to supply the city with wholesome water from the stagnant receptacle of filth which slaughter-houses and other nuisances poured into it.

On the eastern side, the city terminated, as has been said, by the ship-yards on the line of the water, and at a small distance from the shore by a steep bank, on which was walled in a cemetery called the Jew's burying-ground. Near this bank stood a house, now a tavern, and called from its central situation Centre House. Beyond the cemetery were orchards, gardens, and meadows, suffering decay from the effects of war.

To return to the extreme or south point of the island and town. Below the towering hill on which Fort George bristled with cannon, lay the

battery, a fortification covering a portion of that health-giving space still bearing the name. Part of the ramparts advanced to the water's edge, and on the north, between them and Broadway, the rocky foundation protruded, until the earth of the hill on which the towering fort stood was brought down, since the war of independence, to cover them.

Such were some of the features and boundaries of New-York during and after the revolution. The places of amusement were the ball-room of the City Tavern, on the spot where now a part of the City Hotel stands, the theatre in John Street, and the Mall, the walk in front of the ruins of Trinity Church, the resort of beaux and belles during the summer evenings, walking in thoughtless gaiety or with measured steps to the music of the military bands placed by the officers amid the graves of the churchyard.

The military parade was each morning likewise in front of the ruins of Trinity Church: the divisions of soldiers assigned to each post of guard throughout the city were marched from thence to their several guard-houses; the main-guard being at the City Hall in Wall Street. Here might be seen the Hessian, with his towering brass-fronted cap, mustachios coloured with the same material that coloured his shoes, his hair plastered with tallow and flour, and tightly drawn into a long appendage reaching from the back of the head to his waist, his blue uniform almost covered by the broad belts sustaining his cartouch-box, his brass-

hilted sword, and his bayonet ; a yellow waistcoat with flaps, and yellow breeches were met at the knee by black gaiters ; and thus heavily equipped, he stood an automaton, and received the command or the cane of the officer who inspected him. A contrast to the German was the Highlander, who, though loaded with weapons and accoutrements, appeared free and flowing in the contour of his figure ; with his low checkered bonnet, his tartan or plaid, his short red coat, his kilt, leaving his knees exposed to the view and the winds, and his legs partly covered by the many-coloured hose of his country. His musket, bayonet, broadsword, dirk, and pistols, showed a formidable array for the strife of blood, and the ornamental portion of his dress was completed by a pouch hanging in front of his kilt decorated with tassels. This costume was changed after the first or second campaign in a country whose temperature and warfare were both unsuited to it. These were the most striking and most contrasted costumes of the army of the king at this time, though we could describe perhaps graphically the gallant grenadiers of Anspach, with their towering black caps and sombre but military array ; the gaudy Waldeckers, their cocked hats edged with yellow scallops ; the German Yagers ; and the various corps of English in glittering and gallant pomp, such as then was seen day by day, in that walk, now passed by our gay and peaceful citizens as they seek the breezes of the Battery, or obey the call of the church bell,

or hurry to the banks, and brokers' and insurance-offices, of Wall Street.

The main-guard of the city was at the City Hall, a clumsy building projecting into Wall Street at the head of Broad Street. For a short time General Lee was closely confined in this place.

The theatre in John Street was kept in preservation by the loyal adherents of the crown and the episcopal church, while the places of worship of the dissenters were most of them used as barracks, store-houses, and riding-schools.

The players were succeeded by the officers of his Britannic majesty's army and navy, and, as a link in the chain of the theatrical history of the country, however imperfect and rusty the link may be thought, we will preserve what is now known of the Drama of that time.

The military Thespians began their transatlantic histrionic career, as well as their less brilliant career of arms, in Boston. As no theatre had been built in the town, some place admitting of the change must have been fitted up as such. The accomplished Burgoyne, who commenced dramatic author in 1775, by *The Maid of the Oaks*, now produced his second drama in that stronghold of puritanism and unconquerable liberty; and *The Heiress* was preceded by a farce called *The Blockade of Boston*, doubtless intended to ridicule the Yankees, who then held the soldiers of Britain cooped up on that narrow neck of land, protected by their ships, soon after expelled them with dis-

grace, and subsequently received the surrendered sword of the unfortunate poet on the meadow of Saratoga, as dear to us as *Runnimeade* to our English forefathers.

It is remembered that, while the officers were performing Burgoyne's farce, an alarm was given that the rebels had assaulted the lines, and when a serjeant entered and announced the fact, the audience supposing that his words, "The rebels have attacked the lines on the Neck," belonged to the farce, applauded the very natural acting of the man, and were not disturbed until successive *encores* convinced them that it was not to the play that the words, however apropos, belonged, and that the prompter of the speaker was not behind the scenes, but behind the trenches. This was, as far as is known, the second drama written in America, and the first, so written, that was performed, although not by professors of the art histrionic, but amateurs. Another piece in a dramatic form was published about this time, and perhaps ought to take chronological precedence. It bears no date, but as it was printed by James Rivington, in New-York, evidently previous to the occupation of that city by the British, and purports to have been originally printed in New-England, it must have been published as soon, if not before, *The Blockade of Boston* was played by the British officers. That it was written before hostilities commenced, its politics and whole scope and tendency evince. Though its form is dra-

matic, it was not intended for representation, but by its humour and satire to attract readers and gain proselytes to the cause of royalty or toryism. It is entitled *The Americans Roused, in a cure for the Spleen*, and the *dramatis personæ* are Sharp, a country Parson, Bumper, a country Justice, Fillpot, an Innkeeper, Graveairs, a Deacon, Trim, a Barber, Brim a Quaker, and Puff, a late Representative.

Trim, a political barber, conceited and talkative, a piece of a Quotem and a Lingo, and more of a Razor, is the advocate of the people in his shop, but merely because it serves his interest. The real advocates of freedom are Mr. Puff, who, to suit the author's views, is a stupid, ignorant, pretending blockhead, and Deacon Graveairs as stupid and ignorant as himself. The shrewd Quaker, the honest Justice, and the orthodox well-informed and perfect Parson, are all friends to old England's paternal dominion and right of rule over the colonists. The result is, that all become converts to the Parson's doctrine. The Barber says he is "determined to drop" his "shop preachments, or else to take the right side of the question," whatever becomes of his custom. The Deacon fears that he and his patriotic friends have been wrong. The Representative begins "to see things in a different light." The Landlord is glad he had "nothing to do with these matters." And the Quaker sums up, or, as the players say, *tags* the piece, with "Treason is an odious crime in the

sight of God and men ; may we none of us listen to the suggestions of Satan ; but may the candle of the Lord within lighten our paths ; and may the Spirit lead us in the way of truth, and preserve us from all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion."

So much for the politics of the piece ; as specimens of the character and dramatic humour, take the following. Trim protesting against the banishment of politics from his shop because they are a part of his trade, Brim says—" Why I have often heard thee holding forth to thy customers with such apparent zeal against British tyranny and oppression, that I was verily persuaded thou wert infected with the epidemical phrensy of the times.

Trim. Ay, friend Brim, all trades have their mysteries, and one-half the world live by the *fol-lies* of the other half.

Puff. But pray, Mr. Trim, are you such a tory as to turn all our grievances into scorn and derision, and only pretend to be a friend to your country for the sake of a living !

Trim. Why, between you and me and the post, Mr. Puff, I believe you, when you would be a representative, and Trim the barber, when he would get and keep good custom, act upon the same principles," &c.

Trim elsewhere says — " If I was denied the privilege of my shop to canvass politics, as a body may say, that is Lord North, East India Com-

pany, constitution, charter-rights and privileges, duties, taxes, and the like o' that, body o' me, sir, strip me of this darling privilege, and you may take my razors, soap, combs, and all."

The parson compares the Americans to the Jews, who, though placed in the chosen land by their king, who had "driven out the Canaanites, the Indians, before them, now vauntingly say, Who shall be Lord over us?"

Brim wishes the clergyman to teach the truth to the republicans, for he "seems to be moved to become a light to their feet, and a lamp to their path.

Trim. *Face* is the Latin for candle — I am dumb — '*Perge domine reverende.*'"

The parson thunders against the ministers who had used the pulpit to stir up rebellion.

Trim joins in with "As Dryden says,

These lead the path, though not of surest scent,
Yet deepest mouth'd against the government.

And Lilly's grammar ranks them with beasts and robbers — '*Bos, fur, sus, atque sacerdos.*' — No offence to you, sir."

The author of *A Cure for the Spleen* was a dramatist. And although his work may not strictly belong to the History of the American Theatre, it may class with American dramatic literature, and therefore not be thought out of place here. Although the best plays are those originally intended for representation, many very excellent

dramas have been written altogether for the closet, some to inculcate religious doctrines, some devoted to the delineation of passion, and others merely the sport of poetic imagination. This American drama was intended to instruct in government and politics, and, however mistaken the author was, and has been proved to be, he possessed talents for the species of writing which comes under our consideration of no ordinary kind.

In the centre of the Bowling-Green stood the pedestal from which his leaden majesty George the Third had been hurled by his rebellious subjects, and his ponderous effigy and his still more ponderous horse metamorphosed into bullets, to repel the blessings which his benevolent government would have forced upon them at the point of the bayonet.

Another statue, though not equestrian, ornamented Wall Street, where it crossed by William-Street, or rather as then named, where Smith Street and William Street met in Wall Street. This was a marble representation of Lord Chat-ham; the hand which had been outstretched to inforce his eloquence, and the head from whence it flowed, had been stricken off, whether by the vulgar partisans of whiggism or toryism, tradition sayeth not.

The Coffee-house of the city was on the south-east corner of Wall and Water Streets. A platform of wood occupied the centre of the street, running from Queen Street to Water Street, and

was called the Coffee-house-bridge. This was the place for auctioneers, then called vendue-masters, to cry and sell their wares. Rivington's celebrated printing-office was at the north-east corner of Wall and Queen Streets (now Pearl), and his book-store occupied the lower story of the house, from which the criers of the newspapers (for then they depended on sale by these hawkers), issued with yells in every pitch of the human voice, from the "childish treble" to the bassoon sounds of a tall fellow who roared in tones of thunder, "Bloody news! bloody news! bloody news! where are the rebels *now*?" And he was confident that Rivington had justified his triumphant shout, for every paper defeated some portion of the rebel army, and added glory to his majesty's arms.

Having been driven from Boston, the warriors of England triumphantly took possession of the city and theatre of New-York, such as both have been described above.

A *corps dramatique* was formed, and the theatre in John Street opened on the 25th of January, 1777. The manager for several years and principal low comedian, was Doctor Beaumont, Surgeon General of his Majesty's army in America. We remember his Scrub and Mock Doctor, characters which, seen a few years afterwards in London, as performed by Quick and Edwin, appeared, such is the force of first impressions in early life, very inferior to the representations of the manager-doctor

of John Street. Col. French played Scrub likewise with great success.

Women's characters, as in the time of Shakespeare, were frequently performed by the younger subalterns of the army, and we have before us the name of Lieutenant Pennefeather as Estifania, in the well-known *Rule a Wife* of Beaumont and Fletcher. It is to be hoped that the allies of the English arms, the Mohawks, Senecas, Onondagos, and other supporters of his majesty's honour, and asserters of the cause of justice, mercy, and humanity, were ignorant that the warriors of their great father, George, submitted to the degradation of the petticoat.

Major Williams, of the Artillery, was the hero of tragedy, the Richard and Macbeth of the company, and the heroine bore his name, though not received as the legal possessor. Her comedy had great merit. Mrs. Sullen and Clarinda are particularly remembered. There were other females associated with the company, such as had "followed the drum," and these were paid for their services at the rate of two, three, and four guineas each performance. The names of Captain Oliver Delancy, 17th Dragoons, Captain Michael Seix, 22d Foot, Captain Wm. Loftus, Guards, Captain Edward Bradden, 15th Foot, Lieut. Pennefeather, Captain Phipps, Captain Stanley, Wm. Hewlet, and Wm. C. Hewlet are recorded, with that of Major André, as performing at this time. We re-

member, besides these, many others, afterwards known in London, when peace and half-pay had deprived them of much of the heroic splendour which surrounded them in the streets and on the stage of New-York.

The house in John Street was now called the "Theatre Royal." The play-bills were headed "Charity," and sometimes "For the benefit of the Orphans and Widows of Soldiers."

This company of comedians opened their Theatre Royal with a prologue, written for the occasion, and spoken by the author, Captain Stanley, and limited their efforts the first night to the performance of *Tom Thumb*. Their loyal friends applauded the performer both at the theatres and in the Royal Gazettes. They had opened the theatre shut up by the Congress. They possessed humour and spirit, and proved that "good education and knowledge of polite life are essentially necessary to form a good actor"—this was said when the performers had proved these qualifications only by playing *Tom Thumb*. The prologue was pronounced honourable to the "infant muse" of Captain Stanley; and "the scenes painted by Captain Delancy," who by-the-by was a manager at this time, "would not disgrace a theatre under the management of a Garrick. The house was crowded with company, and the ladies made a brilliant appearance." Tickets were advertised to be had of "David Matthews, Esq. Mayor, Wm. Waddle, Esq. Alderman, and of the printer, Hugh Gaine,

at the Bible and Crown." Captain Delancy was a performer, manager, and scene painter, and Major André likewise played and painted scenery. Mr. Wm. Hewlet, at this time a teacher of dancing, occasionally performed—the reader will recollect that he joined the real comedians soon after their emigration to this country, having been sent out by Wm. Hallam, of Goodman's Fields theatre, in 1753. His son, Wm. C. Hewlet, a remarkably beautiful youth, occasionally played and danced. He entered the army as an officer, and soon after died in the West Indies.

It is not to be forgotten that the profits, arising from the amusements of these lovers of the drama, were applied to the relief of sufferers in that inclement season, which prevented the operations of war, and gave leisure from military duty to these gentlemen of the army. Neither is this occupation of a portion of their time, when the idleness of a garrison might have induced more pernicious employment of leisure hours than studying the poets or reciting them, to be severely, if at all, censured. It is not to be compared with the folly of those young men who neglect their education or the sober pursuits destined for them by their parents, to associate clandestinely for the purpose of acting plays, who enter into expenses which may lead to crime for their support, and, in consequence of the applause bestowed upon their performances by their ignorant auditors, are led to abandon the pursuits intended to lead them to honour, and to

embrace a profession as full of hazards as of difficulty ; a profession stigmatized, whether justly or not, is not now the question, as one not congenial to the habits of ordinary life. These military men were engaged in a profession which the world has chosen to honour, and their associating together and imitating players was not considered derogatory, neither did it lead to an abandonment of the road they had chosen for their path to fortune or fame. They had, as observed, the further inducement for preferring this amusement to others, that the result relieved the miseries which war and winter inflicted on the poor.

The following notice appeared upon the play-bill of Feb. 10th, 1777: "The gentlemen concerned in the above charity give notice, that they have lodged one hundred pounds with Doctor Morris, treasurer to the charity, for the purpose of giving such immediate relief to widows and orphans of soldiers who, by certificates from commanding officers of corps, appear to be proper objects." It is recorded that the expence of a night's performance was £80, or 200 dollars. And further, that Captain Madden was *famous* as Papillon and the Copper Captain, Captain Loftus as Young Wilding and Archer, Captain Delancy as Boniface, and Lieutenant Pennefeather as Estifania, in *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*.

On the 6th of January, 1778, the Theatre Royal was opened with *Douglas* and *The Apprentice*. Gaine's Mercury of the 12th says, the audience

was a crowded one, and the play was received with universal applause. The following prologue was written for the opening, and spoken on the occasion :

Now that hoar winter o'er the frozen plain
Has spread the terrors of his dreary reign,
Has bade awhile the din of battle cease,
And mock these regions with the mask of peace,
Once more the Scenic Muse exerts her power,
And claims her portion of the leisure hour.
To prompt the laugh, the brow of care to smooth,
(And this sad land has cares enough to sooth)
To wake to pity, and with soft control
Melt into tender sympathy the soul ;
Vice to discourage, or, with bolder aim,
Rouse to high deeds and point the way to fame ;
These are the ends which from the earliest age
Have been the boast and object of the stage.
We have a nobler purpose still in view,
A tribute to our falling comrades' due ;
From us their helpless infants shall be fed,
And fainting misery receive its bread.
O Britons ! (and your generous thirst of fame
Has fully proved you worthy of the name),
Though scowling faction's interested band
At home asperse us, and with envious hand
Our well earn'd laurels tear, the public weal
Bids us not murmur, whatsoe'er we feel ;
But, to those honour'd names, whose free applause
Rewards the champions of their country's cause,
Whose generous breasts feel for each soldier slain,
Nor suffer blood so shed to flow in vain ;
Whose liberal hand allays the widow's grief,
And to her starving babes affords relief ;
To those whose bounty thus our toil repays,
O friends ! withhold not the full meed of praise ;
Their fair example bade our stage arise,
Blest be th' amusement which relief supplies
To infant wretchedness, to widow'd age,
And the maim'd victim of the battle's rage.

With you for judges, and such views as these,
 (Although with anxious care and wish to please)
 No fears distress us. To secure applause,
 We'll plead no other merit than our cause.

This prologue is not unworthy of preceding the first appearance of Home's excellent tragedy in America. The author is unknown.

We insert the following curious account of the first rehearsal of the tragedy of *Douglas*, taken from the Edinburgh Evening Post.

It may not be generally known that the first rehearsal of this tragedy took place in the lodgings in the Canongate occupied by Mrs. Sarah Ward, one of Diggs' company; and that it was rehearsed by, and in the presence of, the most distinguished characters Scotland could ever boast of. The following was the cast of the piece on that occasion.

Lord Randolph,	Doctor Robertson, Principal, Edinburgh.
Glenalvon,	David Hume, Historian.
Old Norval,	Doctor Carlyle, Minister of Musselburg.
Douglas,	John Home, the Author.
Lady Randolph,	Doctor Ferguson, Professor.
Anna (maid),	Doctor Blair, Minister, high church.

The audience that day, besides Mrs. Diggs and Mrs. Sarah Ward, were the Right Honourable Lord Wilbank, Lord Milton, Lord Kaimes, Lord Monboddo (the two last were then only lawyers), the Rev. John Steel, and William Home, ministers. The company (all but Mrs. Ward) dined afterwards at the Griskin Club, in the Abbey.

The above is a signal proof of the strong passion for the drama which then obtained among the literati of this capital; since then, unfortunately, much abated. The rehearsal must have been conducted with very great secrecy; for what would the Kirk, which took such deep offence at the composition of the piece by one of its ministers, have said to the fact of no less than four of these being engaged in rehearsing it, and two others attending the exhibition? The circumstance of the gentle Anna having been personated by Doctor Blair, minister of the high church, is a very droll one.

H. 2
 U O P M

Cumberland's *West Indian* was first played in America, on the 15th of January, 1778. The house was so thronged as to exclude numbers who had purchased tickets. The receipts amounted to £310, or 776 dollars. Both the new plays, *Douglas* and *The West Indian*, were seen by the writer as represented by these performers. The Lady Randolph of Mrs. Siddons is the only image of that character remaining on the tablets of his memory, but the military Major O'Flaherty shares with the original Moody, and with John Henry, in making the picture of the best Irish gentleman belonging to the stage.

On the 27th of March, the tragedy of *Othello* was announced for performance. Major Moncrieff, of the Engineers, was the Othello, and from the following extract we may gather that the major had performed for his amusement, before the war, with the company of Douglass in New-York. "The gentleman who it is said is to appear in *Othello* (Major Moncrieff, of the Engineers) is eminent in tragedy, and has *figured much to his reputation in that distinguished part some years ago in this city*, to a crowded audience, and therefore much may be expected from his talents for the charitable purpose which occasions his intended appearance."

The theatre was announced to be closed on the 11th of May, but, says a bill of a later date, "The managers and gentlemen of the theatre, from a sense of the distress of those poor persons who did



not fall within their original design, propose to give a play for *that purpose*, and accordingly, on Wednesday evening (May 20th), will be presented, *The Recruiting Officer*, with a farce called *The Miller of Mansfield*."

To some it may be interesting to have the names of the managers and performers for charity's sake, at the Theatre Royal, New-York, in 1778. Col. Guy Johnson, and Doctor Hammond Beaumont, managers—the latter a performer as Iago—Hecate—Lovegold—Scrub—Mock Doctor. Major Edward Williams (Artillery) Richard—Macbeth. Captain Stephen Payne Adye (Artillery and Judge Advocate) King Henry the Sixth. Major John André (Guards and Adjutant General). Captain Wm. Fawcet (Guards). Captain McDonell (71st Foot). Major O'Flaherty, Ranger—Douglas. Captain Hardenbrook (Provincials), Belcour. Lieutenant Le Grange (Provincials). Captain Thomas Shreve (Provincials), Duke of Venice—Lord Mayor—Freeman. Major Lowther Pennington (Guards), Othello. Lieutenant Butler (8th Foot), Stockwell. Major Moncrieff (Engineers), Othello. Lieutenant Spencer, of the Queen's Rangers. This gentleman played Richard the Third at Bath in 1785, and the next day he was thus noticed in one of the papers: "The debutant of last night has long been known as an excellent player—at *billiards*."

As the officers had musicians at hand in their regimental bands, the orchestra was better filled than in the times of the real players. They had

fourteen performers at a dollar the night. Their scenery is said to have been wretched, their dresses elegant.

Notwithstanding this general censure of the scenery, we remember the usual variety—streets—woods and wilds—chambers and palaces. It has likewise been confidently asserted that Major André was expert at the brush. The scene department was likewise assisted by Mr. Thomas Barrow, originally a coach-painter, and for many years the only dealer in engravings known in New-York. Mr. Barrow had taste and knowledge in the art of design.

When the British army took possession of Philadelphia, the theatre in Southwark was opened and supported as that in John Street continued to be. Major André and Captain Delancy were the scene-painters here also, and it is recorded that a drop-curtain, painted by the first, continued to be used as long as the house stood.

In addition to their amusements at the theatre, the military gentlemen of this gay and chivalrous army got up with great splendour an entertainment which they called a Maschienza, a mixture of Ball, Masquerade, and Tournament, which does not fall within our limits, and for an account of which we refer the reader to Watson's Antiquarian Researches.

In Gaine's Mercury of Nov. 15th, 1779, appeared this advertisement: "Theatre Royal. Such ladies as are duly qualified, and inclined to perform on the

stage during the course of the ensuing winter, will please to send in their proposals, sealed and directed to the managers, to be left at Mr. Rivington's."

The office of prompter, so essential in a theatre, was filled by Mr. Hemsworth, who occasionally played; he was not an officer, and for his benefit a play was occasionally performed, otherwise, benefits could not be a part of the dramatic arrangement, where all was for the benefit of the poor.

From Nov. 13th, 1780, to June 11th, 1781, the theatre was kept open, but as the efforts of the managers of the great military drama became languid, so the ardour for the stage declined; and the theatre was abandoned by the military occupants before the town was surrendered to the man who had been their constant attendant, and sometimes rather an interruption to their sports, from the period of the blockade of Boston to the final sinking of the English flag, on the 25th of November, 1783.

CHAPTER V.

The American Company received coldly on its Return — Hallam commences playing first in Philadelphia, then in New-York — Henry, Wignell, and others, join Hallam — Hamlet first played — Celebrated Players of the Character — School for Scandal — Poor Soldier — Certificates first Issued — First Theatre in Baltimore — Richmond — Hallam and Henry open the Philadelphia Theatre — Debate in Pennsylvania Legislature — Second Theatre in Charleston.

WITH peace returned the players by profession, but not the whole company. Hallam arrived first, with a weak detachment, as if to gain a footing in the New Republic. Philadelphia was the place chosen at which to effect a landing, but the people received the runaways with frowns.

When our enlightened and beneficent ancestors, Hampden, Pym, Vane, Milton, and their glorious companions, raised the standard of humanity against that of ignorance and oppression, and put to flight the dramatic Muse by the clang of the trumpet and thunder of the war-horse, her retainers, being the king's servants, exchanged the mock truncheon and the foil of the green-room and the stage for real command and pointed weapons, in the ranks of their royal master ; but it does not appear that any of the stage heroes of the American company became leaders or followers in the

regiments of George the Third. They seem to have gained a safe distance from the scene of strife, when our more recent patriots defied and put to flight the standard and adherents of monarchy, and, having seen the stage on which the contending parties had been playing a tragedy of ten acts cleared by the retreat of the royalists, they crept from their hiding-places and approached warily to the land in which they felt that they had no part or portion as partakers in its dangers, its sufferings, or its glories. The republicans received them at first with coldness, and many would have willingly continued the prohibition of stage-plays which the caution of the first Continental Congress had so effectually recommended.

The theatre in Southwark was opened by Halam, assisted by Mr. Allen, on the 11th of March, 1785. The *Pennsylvania Mercury* praises their entertainments, and expresses the hope "that Shakspeare, Addison, and Young, may be permitted once more to enforce on our citizens the love of virtue, liberty, and morality." It is added, that these gentlemen, the players, had presented to the poor of the city one hundred pounds, from the profits of their exhibitions.

The Legislature of Pennsylvania was in session at this time; and after the players had retired to New-York, a debate took place on the subject of prohibiting a theatre, which, as it may stand for a fair specimen of the opinions for and against the drama at this period, shall be laid before the reader

in a brief abstract, before we accompany the Thespians to John Street.

A motion was made to add a clause to a bill before the house for suppressing vice and immorality. This clause prohibited the erecting of any "play-house, stage, or scaffold," for the purpose of acting any kind of dramatic work, enumerating them, from the tragedy to the pantomime, and fined all persons concerned in or abetting in any manner such immoral practices.

In the debate that followed, Gen. Wayne, the hero of Stoneypoint, was the first speaker. He hoped that the theatre would not be mentioned in a bill for suppressing vice and immorality. He asserted that a well regulated theatre was universally acknowledged to be an efficient engine for the improvement of morals.

Doctor Logan thought that theatres were only fit for monarchies. He said the government of Geneva prohibited a theatre in that republic as inimical to their liberties; that the kings of France and Sardinia had endeavoured to establish a theatre in Geneva to subvert the republic. He however added, "if we had a theatre under proper regulations, where no plays should be exhibited but those calculated to expose vice or recommend virtue, I should have no objection."

Mr. Robert Morris, one of the greatest of our statesmen, and the ablest of financiers, boldly declared himself a friend to the theatre, as affording a rational, instructive, and innocent amusement.

“As to the effect of the theatre on morals and manners, I hold it,” said he, “to be favourable to both.”

Mr. Clymer, in favour of the drama, argued that, say or do what we would, a theatre would be forced upon us; it is a concomitant of an independent state. No civilized state is without it.” He contended that it served to refine and purify manners. “Are we for ever,” said he, “to be indebted to other nations for genius, wit, and refinement?”

Mr. Fitzsimmons wished the question of the utility of a theatre to be fully discussed.

Mr. Whitehill, the mover of the clause, avowed his opinion that no regulation could prevent the vice and immorality of a theatre, and said he would oppose the establishment of one in the state of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Smiley thought that by drawing the minds of the people to amusements, they were led to forget their political duties. “Cardinal Mazarine,” he said, “established the Academy of Arts and Sciences in France with this view.” He avowed himself “no friend to the fine arts,” and asserted that “they only flourished when states were on the decline.”

The last mentioned speaker has at least the merit of consistency. He had sagacity enough to perceive that the fine arts were all connected, and must stand or fall together, and he knew that the drama was one of the number. He placed the theatre where it should be; for if the drama is in-

jurious to a state, so are literature and the arts. His last assertion was the fruit of ignorance in the history of nations. He honestly confounded the abuse of things with the things themselves. What has been so abused to the purposes of evil as the press? What is so precious to man?

Mr. Finley saw in a theatre regulated by government "a dangerous" tool in its hands, forgetting that the people who created the ministers of government were the judges of the representations brought on the stage, and that such an engine in the hands of government would be jealously watched by the people. A theatre directed by government would be attended by the best citizens; they would guarantee the purity of this source of instruction and delight, and the political impulse given must always accord with the opinion of the public; so must the laws of a state, or they become nugatory. Mr. Finley concluded that the stage vitiated taste by representing unreal characters.

Mr. Clymer, in reply, said, that "if the pieces represented are not immoral, the stage cannot be immoral." He asserted that, as the people of Europe had progressed in civilization and refinement, their plays had improved in purity.

Mr. Robert Morris asserted that all celebrated nations had "permitted the establishment of theatres, and that they had improved the manners of the people. The writers for the theatre have generally been men of extensive genius." He thought the lessons given to vice and folly salutary. He

hoped to see American poets suiting plays to our times, characters, and circumstances. "The taste and manners of a people," he said, "regulate the theatre ; and the theatre has a reciprocal effect on the public taste and manners."

General Wayne said he thought the prohibition of plays during the war, by Congress, was an ill-judged measure, as plays might have been represented that would have stimulated to heroic actions. "A theatre," he said, "in the hands of a republican government, regulated and directed by such, would be, instead of a dangerous instrument, a happy and efficient one."

Mr. Whitehill, in reply, repeated his opinion that the establishment of a theatre tended "directly to the encouragement of licentiousness."

Mr. Robert Morris, after some further remarks in favour of the stage, concluded by saying, "in such large societies as are common in cities like this, people will find out amusements for themselves unless government do it." He expressed his belief as before, that a regulated theatre improved morals.

Mr. Robinson argued against the theatre, from the bad tendency of many plays.

Mr. Smiley thought that the plays now in existence were in general unfit for our state of society.

Mr. Finley opposed fiction, and brought examples of plays inculcating immorality.

General Wayne proposed that all plays previous to performance should be submitted to the

executive council, who would be responsible to the people.

Mr. Clymer exposed that ignorance which asserted that the fine arts only flourished under despotism, or in the decline of liberty. He said, Virgil and Horace were men before the republic was overthrown, and in Greece there was not a single author of eminence after the fall of republicanism. The clause which prohibited the drama, as being one of the sources of vice and immorality, was rejected.

After his attempt upon Philadelphia, Hallam, with his feeble band, effected a lodgment in the theatre of New-York, of which he was now the principal if not the sole proprietor, and advertised a course of lectures, to begin with a prologue and terminate with a pantomime; the music to be selected and composed by Mr. Bentley. This was August 24, 1785.

They continued this skirmishing with farces and pantomimes until 24th October, when they came out boldly with a play and afterpiece.

The first play performed in the United States under the protection of the flag, called proudly by Americans *the Star-spangled Banner*, and in derision by England *the piece of striped bunting*, was *The Countess of Salisbury*; the afterpiece, *The Ghost*. The names in this feeble company were Hallam, Moore, Bentley, Lake, Allen, Durang, Mrs. Allen, and Miss Durang; the first alone possessing the skill of an artist in his profession. He

was in this short campaign the hero of tragedy and comedy, the low comedian of farce, and the harlequin of pantomime. They closed the house on the 24th of October.

But the Star-spangled Banner could not protect a man from the censure of the magistrates in the enlightened city of New-York, for daring to invite the people of a free republic to hear recitations or lectures, or the works of the poet who had devoted himself to the tragic or the comic Muse, as the following document proves :

At a meeting of the Common Council, held in the city of New-York, at the City-Hall, on Friday, the 14th of October, 1785, present James Duane, mayor, Richard Varick, recorder, &c. &c. "Whereas it has been represented to this board, in behalf of Mr. Lawrence Embree, one of the commissioners of the alms-house, that the company of comedians in this city, some time since, presented him with forty pounds for the use of the poor ; that, as he disapproved of a donation so circumstanced, he thought it his duty to suffer it to be deposited with him until the sense of the magistrates respecting the same could be obtained." Whereupon the board came to the following resolutions :

That it appears that the play-house was opened by said comedians without licence or permission of the civil authority ; which in the opinion of this board is a thing unprecedented and offensive. That while so great a part of this city still lies in ruins, and many of the citizens continue to be pressed with the distresses brought on them in consequence of the late war, there is a loud call for industry and economy ; and it would in a particular manner be unjustifiable in this corporation to countenance enticing and expensive amusements ; that among these a play-house, however regulated, must be numbered, when under no restraint it may prove a fruitful source of dissipation, immorality, and vice. That the acceptance of the said donation by the order of this board might authorize a conclusion that they approved of the opening of said theatre, and that therefore it be and it hereby is recommended to Mr. Embree to return the same to the person from whom he received it.



We personally knew and highly respect the memories of the persons here named. Mr. Embree, doubtless, acted by the guidance of the sect he belonged to, or the direction of the quarterly meeting of *Friends*. The names of Duane and Varick are unsullied. But the errors or prejudices of the best have no claim to respect. A few days afterwards, a writer in Oswald's Journal ironically praises the wisdom of the city magistrates for discountenancing the theatre, and preferring the licensing tippling-shops, they being harmless and yielding a revenue unpolluted by its source. This writer in the Journal takes it for granted that the Common Council sent from their own pockets the hundred dollars to the poor, which they so wisely prevented them from receiving as a donation from a playhouse.

We have seen that Douglass, under the government of the king's officers, had committed the same oversight that Hallam now suffered for. He opened a theatre without having "boo'd to the gowden calves" in office. He suffered for it, and had to kneel to the delegates of majesty. Hallam perhaps thought that times, and things, and opinions, and therefore magistrates, had changed. He forgot that man only changes as he becomes individually enlightened. The ignorant are the same at all times, and the office-holder ever prone to the assumption of airs of superiority. The successors of King George's minions could not think themselves of less importance than their predeces-

sors. Official dignity was offended. These players "without license or permission" had opened a play-house, "a thing in the opinion of this board unprecedented." Where did they look for precedents that made it necessary to obtain such license? To the government which their wiser countrymen had overthrown, because it shackled the mind of man and bowed him to assumed superiority?

On the 21st of November, 1785, the New-York theatre was opened in form, under the management of Hallam and Henry. Mrs. Douglass, Hallam's mother, had been some time dead; Douglass remained in the island of Jamaica, where he played the part in real life of one of his Britannic majesty's judges. He relinquished the sceptre of the American company to Hallam, who received for the partner of his throne Mr. John Henry. Did the monarchs obtain permission to "strut their hour?"

The company consisted of the managers, who were at the head both by their dignified office and their merit as actors, and of Messrs. Wignell, Harper, Morris, Biddle, Wools, Lake, and Durang; Mesdames Morris, Harper, Miss Tuke, Miss Durang, and occasionally Miss Storer (soon afterwards Mrs. Henry). Hallam, Henry, Wignell, Morris, and Wools, were sharers or proprietors; the remainder were salaried. The motto over the stage was "*Quicquid agunt homines.*"

The Royal Gazette, conducted during the war of the Revolution with great spirit and unbounded

devotion to the cause of Britain, had now passed from the hands of James Rivington into those of Archibald Mc Lean, under the title of the Independent Journal. In this journal we find it stated that on Monday evening, January 16th, 1786, Mr. Hallam made his first appearance in the aiduous character of Hamlet.

This glorious emanation from the genius of the greatest poet and the most consummate searcher into the human heart which the world has known, although mentioned in the list of plays cast by Hallam's uncle before the company left London in 1752, may not, and probably was not, until this date, attempted on the stage in America. The play is difficult in the performance in proportion to the subtle, metaphysical, and philosophical character of its plot and dialogue. The part of Hamlet is the bow of Ulysses to the actor. We do not find the play mentioned in the records of the American company previously to this time, and although the officers of the English army figured as Richards, Macbeths, and Othellos, all far above their reach, none attempted the philosophic, university-bred Prince of Denmark.

There is reason to believe, that Betterton was the first true personator of Hamlet ; and even Betterton, though instructed by Davenant, who had seen the original representative as taught by Shakspeare, though replete with talent and judgment, must have been, in that part of the picture which depends on costume, miserably deficient.

We have Cibber's testimony in favour of the Hamlet of Betterton, and on such subjects the poet laureate is good authority. "You have seen," he says, "a Hamlet perhaps, who on the first appearance of his father's spirit has thrown himself into all the straining vociferation requisite to express rage and fury, and the house has thundered with applause, though the misguided actor was all the while, as Shakspeare terms it, 'tearing a passion into rags'. I am the more bold to offer you this particular instance, because the late Mr. Addison, while I sat by him to see the scene acted, made the same observation, asking me with some surprise if I thought Hamlet 'should be in so violent a passion with the ghost, which, though it might have astonished, had not provoked him, for you may have observed that in his beautiful speech the passion never rises beyond an almost breathless astonishment, or an impatience limited by filial reverence to inquire into the suspected wrongs that may have raised him from his peaceful tomb, and a desire to know what a spirit so seemingly distressed might wish to enjoin a sorrowful son to execute towards his future quiet in the grave.' This was the light in which Betterton threw this scene, which he opened with a pause of mute amazement; then rising slowly to a solemn trembling of the voice, he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself." Another author has said of this actor "that his counte-

nance, naturally ruddy and sanguine, in the scene of the third act where his father's ghost appears, through the violent and sudden emotion of amazement and horror, turned instantly on the sight of his father's spirit as pale as his neckcloth, when his whole body seemed to be affected with a tremour inexpressible, so that, had his father's ghost actually risen before him, he could not have been seized with more real agonies ; and this was felt so strongly by the audience, that the blood seemed to shudder in their veins likewise, and they in some measure partook of the astonishment and horror with which they saw this excellent actor affected."

Those who are familiar with the costume of Hamlet, as first introduced among us by Cooper, and that represented by Lawrence in his picture of Kemble, will see in the " neckcloth " of Betterton, and the wig, and other most unpoetical and most inappropriate parts of dress which we know he wore, that he had not those accessories to help the illusion of the scene which actors since have enjoyed, who do not produce the " astonishment and horror " in the audience which Betterton effected. Betterton flourished from 1665 to 1700.

Wilks, a contemporary with Betterton, gained credit in other portions of the varied character of Hamlet, particularly his reproaches to his mother, and the pathos of his exclamation, " Mother, for the love of grace."

When Garrick had left Goodman's Fields Theatre, the nursery from which afterwards the Hallams issued, he became the representative of Hamlet, and the same receding of colour from the face, and other symptoms of real horror and astonishment recorded of Betterton, are described as having the same effect upon his auditors. All will recollect Fielding's compliment put into the mouth of *Partridge* in *Tom Jones*. It is said that the line "I have that within which passeth show," was made so impressive by his manner as never to be forgotten by the hearers.

Lewis Hallam the second, whose representation of Hamlet has occasioned the above remarks, might have seen Garrick's Hamlet, as it will be remembered that he went from Annapolis to London in the summer of 1774, and Garrick, although declining and diseased, continued playing until the 10th of June, 1776. Certainly Hallam attempted the part at Covent Garden, and made no impression on the audience of that theatre of strength sufficient to induce an engagement.

We now, at the period to which our history of the American Theatre has been brought down, find the *Independent Journal* thus speaking of the first representation of Hamlet. "Mr. Hallam was received with that kindness and eclat which has been shown to him for these last thirty years." In the course of the performance the managers restored the scene of the grave-diggers, which, says the

same paper, "had been discontinued of late years, from whim, by the late Mr. Garrick." Mr. Henry, who played the ghost, appeared in royal robes in the closet scene, taking the idea from the exclamation of young Hamlet,

My father in his habit as he lived.

"This alteration," says the critic, "was much approved, and more especially as this was the first time it had been noticed on the stage."

The scene of the grave-diggers had been restored to the London stage long before, and it will be remembered that it is in *that* scene Lawrence has represented Kemble moralizing on the skull of Yorick.

On the 14th of March, Miss Storer made her first appearance as Nysa in the burletta of *Midas*; and in June, Oswald's Journal speaks with enthusiasm of the delight received from her performance in *The Maid of the Mill*.

May 10th, *The Busy Body* and *Rosina* were performed for the benefit of the "distressed prisoners confined in the jail for debt." The sum of one hundred dollars was raised and paid to the sheriff.

The company was strengthened by the arrival from London of Mr. and Mrs. Kenna, Mr. J. Kenna, and Miss Kenna. Mrs. Kenna made her debut in *Isabella* and her husband in *Lissardo*. Soon after the benefits commenced, and Miss M.

Storer, who had not before appeared, played on the 29th of May, for Henry's benefit, being announced as "a gentlewoman." She chose Patty in *The Maid of the Mill*, and Daphne in *Daphne and Amin-tor*, for her opening characters, and afterwards for the benefit of Wools she played Rosetta in *Love in a Village*, and the Lady in *Comus*, probably the first time Milton spoke from the stage in the New World.

Sheridan and O'Keefe came before the American public for the first time this theatrical season. *The School for Scandal*, *The Duenna*, and *The Poor Soldier*, took their stand on the boards never to be removed. Wignell's Joseph Surface and Darby, Henry's Sir Peter Teazle and Patrick, are still remembered with pleasure after the lapse of nearly half a century. The first issuing of certificates for places in the boxes may be traced to the following notice. "Theatre. The public are respectfully informed, that on account of a number of complaints relative to *unfair preference in boxes*, many of which have been lately taken without being occupied, the managers, ever ready to show their attention to the accommodation of their friends and patrons, have adopted a mode to prevent any similar infringement in future by having tickets for the night, which will be delivered by the box-keeper, on payment, to the gentlemen taking boxes, with the number of places particularized ; a measure which they flatter themselves

will meet with general approbation. Hallam and Henry."

The friends and enemies of the drama continued their paper warfare during the whole time of the company's now performing in New-York. *A whig* attacks theatrical exhibitions in Loudon's New-York Packet of September 29th. *Moralitas* answers him. Some months after a memorial was presented to the legislature of New-York, praying the suppression of the theatre, and this was met by a counter-memorial.

It appears from a publication in Loudon's New-York Packet, that the clergy of the city went so far as to attack the stage from the pulpit, and so far inflamed a portion of their hearers, who doubtless thought themselves pious people, that they threatened to pull down the theatre. Some of these "well-meaning people," fortunately for themselves, consulted their spiritual agitators, and they prudently advised them to petition the legislature then sitting to put down the theatre before they took upon themselves to pull it down. The clergy of the city are praised for having kindled this flame, and praised for setting bounds to it. Their forbearing to sanction the destruction of other people's property and jeopardizing the lives of their fellow-citizens shows a memorable degree of meekness and self-command. The writer (*Impartialis*) praises the clergy for opposing an institution which had been denounced by "the pious and learned in

every age of the church." Besides, the clergy of the city "were whigs," and did not, as the players had done, run away to Jamaica, and leave others to fight the battles of the country. They battled from the pulpit, "drum ecclesiastic." This argument would have shut up or pulled down the Episcopal churches, whose orators had not indeed run away to Jamaica, but had prayed and preached most loyally for King George, and for the overthrow of those in arms against him. The Rev. Doctor Beach and Doctor Provost were exceptions.

The memorial mentioned above was presented to the legislature in April. It prayed for a law, or amendment in existing laws, to put down taverns, infamous houses, sabbath-breakers, profane swearers, and the theatre. The memorialists assert that the stage has been opposed "by the wisest and best men, both heathens and Christians." They assert its enmity to the interests of religion, and its influence in causing "a scarcity of cash," and finally pray for an amendment of the laws against profaneness and immorality, and the suppression of the theatre." This memorial was signed by seven hundred names.

The counter-memorialists were brief and moderate. They only petitioned that the legislature may not be misled by the first petition, and suppose that the citizens wished to suppress the theatre. They say "that they consider the institution in question as a source of innocent and rational

entertainment, not more exceptionable in moral or political respects than any other species of public amusement, and affording advantages to which no other can pretend." They further observe, that, if the exhibitions are contrary to good morals as alleged, they are amenable to the ordinary course of law; if they are not immoral, the interference of the legislature would deprive the citizens of that which they wished, and which had been approved of by great and enlightened minds." Signed by fourteen hundred names.

The opponents of the theatre published an extract from Josiah Quincey's Journal, dated May 11th, 1773, with which we will dismiss the subject for the present. "Went to the playhouse in the evening, saw *The Gamester* and *Padlock* performed. The players made an indifferent figure in tragedy. They make a much better in comedy. Hallam has merit in every character he acts. Mr. Wools, in the character of Don Diego, and Mrs. Morris (the first Mrs. Morris) in that of Ursula, I thought, acted superlatively. I was however much gratified upon the whole, and I believe if I had staid in town (New-York) a month, I should go to the theatre every acting night. But, as a citizen and friend to the morals and happiness of society, I should strive hard against the admission, and much more the establishment, of a play-house in any state of which I was a member." This gentleman afterwards, on seeing *The Beggars' Opera*

in London says, "The stage is the nursery of vice, and disseminates the seeds far and wide with an amazing and baneful effect."

It would have been well if this distinguished patriot had given us facts, or any mode of devising how he draws such conclusions from such premises. *The Gamester* or *Padlock*, particularly the first, one would suppose could not warrant the estimate he forms of the stage. He was delighted, and surely could not have been made worse. *The Beggars' Opera* has been censured, but the mind that could be injured by such a piece of satire must be weak indeed. Even if the pieces were in fault, it is no argument against a theatre any more than a vile book is against the press.

In the Independent Journal of August 5th, 1786, is found this notice of the second theatre in Charleston, South Carolina. "We hear from Charleston, S. C. that a principal merchant of that city, and a Mr. Goodwin, comedian, have leased a lot of land for five years, and have erected a building called Harmony Hall, for the purpose of music meetings, dancing, and theatrical amusements. It is situated in a spacious garden in the suburbs of the city. The boxes are 22 in number, with a key to each box. The pit is very large, and the *theatrum* and orchestra elegant and commodious. It was opened with a grand concert of music *gratis*, for the satisfaction of the principal inhabitants, who wished to see it previous to the first night's exhibition. The above building has cost £500 sterling. Salaries

from 2 to 5 guineas per week, and a benefit night every nine months, is offered to good performers."

While the company were in New-York, the managers caused a theatre to be erected in Baltimore, now rising to overshadow Annapolis, and on the 16th of August, 1786, the first play-house was opened in that city. This was a new soil for the players to cultivate, and their harvest was proportionably great. Their southern friends received them with smiles, and they continued their efforts in the new theatre of Maryland until the beginning of October, when they proceeded to Richmond, which had now become the rising sun of Virginia, and our histrionics appear to shun the sinking towns as naturally as rats fly foundering ships.

From Richmond, after playing a short time, the company in full force removed to Philadelphia, and again took their old stand in the theatre of Southwark, where the unfortunate André had left, as a memorial of his taste, a drop-curtain, which was used for several years after the melancholy termination of the last tragedy he performed in.

CHAPTER VI.

Reflections on the Drama—Plan for its improvement and that of the Professors of the Histrionic Art—The Contrast, a Comedy—Prince of Parthia and Mercenary Match, Tragedies—May-day, Farce—Mrs. Henry and her Sisters—Harper—Doctors' Mob.

WE have now arrived at an era at which our literature begins to be more distinct, more national, more diverging in character, from that of our ancestors or brethren of England, and it may be chosen as a point in our theatrical history, convenient and proper for some reflections on the past and present character of the drama, its influence on society, and its capabilities of improvement.

There are no people on earth who have advanced the least step towards civilization, who have not had their public amusements. These may be purely for relaxation from weightier employment, or for instruction conveyed through such means as tend to delight at the moment they exalt and improve. Mankind, when congregated for the purposes of innocent pleasure, or the higher purposes of receiving lessons in life, morals, or religion, are, by the sympathy of such association, more firmly bound and knit together in the kindlier feelings of our common nature. The merely meeting together for the same purpose, if that purpose is not evil, tends to good.

If we look back upon the history of nations, we shall find that their amusements mark the progress or degree of civilization they had attained at any one period, and their advancement in all that ennobles our nature, or the retrograde movement, the falling off, towards darkness and barbarism.

When Greece was at the pinnacle of her refinement, we see her citizens congregated at her public games, attracted by, and united in, manly exercises, listening to the recitations of poets, witnessing the exhibitions of sculpture and painting, or the representations of the dramatic works of Eschylus, Aristophanes, or Sophocles. Rome, civilized by those she had conquered, never attained so high a point on the scale of mental elevation ; she turned from the theatre to the circus, became enamoured of blood while viewing spectacles of triumph, captives in chains devoted to massacre, brutes striving with brutes or men, and men trained to the slaughter of each other for the amusement of a population devoted by such amusements to slavery and every debasing vice, until a new source of light should arise and dispel the moral darkness. Thus the knowledge and refinement of Greece is marked by her drama, the decline of both in Rome by her gladiatorial shows.

The ages of chivalry are marked by the amusement of the tournament, a step forward again in civilization ; and the song of the minstrel, and the rude drama of the mystery, mark another step in the upward progress. As civilization, learning,

and the arts increased ; as morality and religion struggled through the darkness of barbarism and superstition, men congregated again for ameliorating amusement, and theatres and plays again appear. We see Calderon withdraw the Spaniard's eyes at times from the auto-da-fé and the bull-fight ; the poets, and musicians, and painters, of Italy, raising the stage where false religion and bad government counteracted its influence ; the drama of France advancing as refinement advanced, but trammelled by false taste, and struggling against the maxims of despotic monarchy ; and in England the dawning of "learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes" is marked by the rearing of the stage, and mighty bursting forth of those dramatic luminaries whose light has been obscured only by the greater splendour of Shakspeare. In spite of the barbarism still clinging to our ancestors in his time, in spite of the filth which he, *even he*, could not throw from him, he did more for the enlightenment of his country than any other individual, uninspired, before or since. Civil war and its evils followed. Our ancestors felt the influence of reason, advanced rapidly towards the goal of human excellence, but had to shake off the incubus of the damnable doctrine of divine right in kingship, and then men thought only of the struggle for and against oppression ; of course, the theatre, with all literature, declined. The commonwealth and the protectorate were continued struggles of reason against intolerant bigotry ; republicanism

against profligate monarchy and daring apostacy and usurpation. The arts and the drama were silent. We are left to imagine what would have been the amusements of our ancestors, what would have been their drama, if the nation had been far enough advanced to have formed a true republican representative government—and a Milton, instead of being a Latin secretary to Cromwell, had written for and directed a theatre: the dramas he *did* write are worthy of the best ages of Greece. But our English ancestors were not yet a nation of republicans. Monarchy was restored: licentiousness prevailed; and the stage became a sink of profligacy. From this degraded state, the dramatic literature of England, which is ours, has been rising in purity, though declining in force.

When the drama was introduced into this country, the favourites of England were of course the favourites of the colonies. It is a subject for the historian of America, it is the duty of the historian of our literature, to mark the changes from the plays then popular, plays full of wit, but fraught with indelicacies, not to say obscenities, their very plots so entwined with the loose manners and intrigues of the time as to be incapable of pruning so as to leave the wit, the better part, separated from the filth; it is his duty to point out these favourites of former times, and to show that, as our society has improved, these plays have fallen into desuetude, both here and in England. The indecency and immorality of the plays of Charles the

Second's time, and a later period, belonged to the state of society, and not to the stage or the writers for it, otherwise than as a part of society. If the wise and the good frequent the theatre, its exhibitions must become schools of wisdom. The lessons taught must be those of patriotism, virtue, morality, religion. These lessons would not be thought misplaced as coming from the stage, if the stage had not been polluted by the licentiousness of its supporters ; and when, as it may be, its supporters shall be the moral and the wise, the purest teachings will flow, mingled in the same stream with the delightful waters of Helicon, undefiled by the conduits from which they are received.

If the theatre is abandoned to the uneducated, the idle, and the profligate, mercenary managers will please their visiters by such ribaldry or folly, or worse, as is attractive to such patrons, and productive of profit to themselves.

As Puritanism or bigotry cannot shut the theatre, or even, as in former times in England, fine the actors for repeating the words of the dramatists*, or banish the fine arts from society as being too worldly, or stigmatize their professors as ungodly worldlings, or frivolous or vicious men—let those who seek rational amusement and elevating pleasure, and know the value of such amusements in a political point of view upon the mass of the people—those who know that music, painting, poetry, and the art of the player may be made

* See Life of Betterton.

salutary instruments for refining the mass of the population, unite in supporting, and by their presence purifying and directing, the theatre. Let the lovers of rational enjoyment, the enjoyment set before man by his benevolent Creator, join in the support and purification of every elegant art. What engine is more powerful than the theatre? No arts can be made more effectual for the promotion of good than the dramatic and histrionic. They unite music, poetry, painting, and eloquence. The engine is powerful for good or ill—it is for society to choose.

But the question arises—"How are the evils flowing from theatrical representations to be banished from them, and the good preserved and secured?" The answer is, make the theatre an object of governmental patronage; take the mighty engine into the hands of the people as represented by their delegates and magistrates. The stream of pure instruction flowing into a city is of more worth than even the purity of the water which is to cleanse it, and afford an aliment to banish the poison of the licensed murderers at every corner and every avenue of our towns. If a state or city government were to direct a theatre, nothing could be represented that was not conformable to patriotism, morality, and religion.

If an association of men of taste, literature, and moral standing in the community, should build and open a theatre upon such a plan, select a man of acquirements fitted for the management, and pay him

liberally, not allowing him any interest in the profits or losses, and supervising the whole by a committee or otherwise, gain would not be the object of such an association, and yet gain might accrue. Actors, in either case, of a theatre protected by the government or by an association of private individuals, should be well paid, and selected for their morals as well as talents ; they would be then instruments of good at all times ; and, sheltered from the temptations which now beset the profession, they would be honoured in private as applauded in public.

In Greece, where the arts attained a perfection yet unrivalled, plays were the organs of the public and the stimulants to heroism and patriotic self-devotion. There artists of every description were the cherished instruments of taste and refinement. To make use of the language of an historian and philosopher, “shall we cast into the gulph of oblivion all the taste, and art, and invention, all the monuments of free thought, and sublime and glorious outgoings forth of the soul, which the republics of Rome and Greece have bequeathed us,” in the form of dramas, and all the knowledge contained in modern dramatic authors? Long ought we to strive to untwist the mingled web, and throw away the stained thread, before we consent to such destruction.

If the wise and the good desert the theatre, the directors, on the present plan, having only emolument in view, will attract the idle and vicious by

such entertainments as suit their ignorance or depravity, and the school and the scholars deteriorate together, each acting as cause, each suffering the effect. But is it visionary to suppose a free government, a government of the people, regulating and making more perfect and even more attractive an amusement which the people love, and will have, making it a school that shall invite to virtue and teach the truths of history, philosophy, patriotism, and morals? or that an association of wealthy, enlightened individuals should effect the same salutary object?

The establishment of a theatre and its support is costly. But the expense need be no objection. The price of admission might be very low, and still the expense paid. And a low price of admission would, with the superior excellence of performers and entertainments, put down competitors. Histrionic artists would then be honoured, and not, as under other systems, shunned, and thereby degraded in their own eyes, and made a source of ill to themselves and others.

A history of the theatre of any country ought to show faithfully any ill that may flow from it or attend it, either to the people or to those engaged in supporting, directing, or treading, the stage. Many players have been licentious, many have been the victims of intemperance; but what profession can say "we are free from such members?" It may be a part of our task to show that the temptations are strong which beset the player, and that

they are such as the plan proposed above would remove. But we must not for a moment confound the actor—the histrionic artist—with the pretenders and low hangers-on of the theatre. The message deliverer is to the personator of Hamlet what the hod-carrier is to the architect. But even the lowest retainers of the play-house, if employed, sanctioned, protected, by government, or an association such as above-mentioned, must, with such support and under such controul, be decent, if not virtuous, members of society.

This plan may appear chimerical, and perhaps may be opposed, at first view, by players and managers, as well as by all the enemies of the theatre, who are such from the various motives of blind prejudice, or honest belief that it is a promoter of evil. But let not the latter determine rashly to oppose an engine which is so powerful; let them rather with me devise means to secure it as the auxiliary of all that is precious to man. Let them likewise consider that these remarks do not come from youth and inexperience, but from one long familiar with the subject, long wishing to remedy the evils connected with it, and fully acquainted with them. With this experience and this knowledge, his conclusion is, that the theatre ought to be supported, but that its direction should be wrested from the hands of any person, whose sole aim is profit (either by making money or increasing his professional celebrity), and guided by the enlightened portion of society.

A player's first motive is to increase his fame as an actor, and his popularity; and if he is the manager of a theatre, money, though an attendant on such popularity, is a secondary object. In his choice of pieces to bring before the public, he reads the work of the dramatist with the primary object of finding a character in it that will suit his powers and gain him applause. If there is no such part, he is tempted to pronounce it worthless. His office of manager may then come to his recollection, and he thinks of the probability of its bringing full houses. He has no thought of the quality of the auditors, and if the crowded house of boys, vulgar brawlers, drunkards, rioters, thoughtless or vicious persons of both sexes, fill his treasury as manager, or gratify his desire for applause as actor, he is content.

The manager, not a player, if merely looking to retrieve fortune, or make it, has but one object in view, and is as careless of the tendency of the plays he adopts for his stage as the player. Money is his object. Both say, "we must please the public." But their public becomes that public which is pleased only with glitter, parade, false sentiment, and all that lulls conscience or excites to evil. The wise, the good, even the mere worldlings, who fear for their reputation, desert the place where the first are disgusted, and the last tremble for the character on which their prosperity depends.

Now, all this would be, *must be*, changed, if this powerful engine is in the hands of those whose only

aim is to use it for moral purposes, to instruct, to inspire love of country, virtue, religion, and morality, teaching and improving the public, who are attracted by the hope of amusement, and held by the delights of truth, conveyed by poetry, assisted by music, painting, and eloquence.

The historians of the Celestial Empire, if we remember aright, are prohibited the indulgence of reflections. As we are at liberty to reflect and remark upon the facts we record, and the personages appertaining to our history, we shall take other opportunities to pursue the subject touched upon above, and now return to the thread of our story, chronologically.

On the 12th of February, 1786, Hallam and Henry opened the theatre in John Street, New-York, with *The Provoked Husband*, and *Miss in her Teens*. The company had undergone no material change.

A Mrs. Giffard made a first appearance in Lady Rusport, in *The West Indian*, on the 16th. Hallam's Belcour and Henry's O'Flaherty made this play as popular in America as in England. Cato was played about this time, Sempronius by a gentleman, who soon afterwards took his place in the ranks as Mr. Smallwood.

On the 16th of April, 1786, was performed the first American play which had ever been got up on a regular stage, by a regular company of comedians. It was a comedy in five acts, called *The Contrast*, written by Royal Tyler, Esq., of

Boston, who was encouraged by the favour with which this first effort was received to produce, in the May following, a farce, for the benefit of Wignell, called *May-day, or New-York in an Uproar*. We thus arrive at the commencement of the American drama as united with the American theatre.

As has been noticed, Godfrey's *Prince of Parthia* was published in 1765, appearing in print at the place of the author's residence, Philadelphia*. And we have read the very pleasant and laugh-provoking tragedy of *The Mercenary Match*, written by Barnaby Bidwell, Esq., and played by the students of Yale College, under the auspices of the late Rev. Ezra Styles, D. D., president, the author of a very interesting book on the fugitive judges of Charles the First, by the monarchists called regicides. This tragedy was, perhaps still is, in blank verse. The shouts of laughter produced by the reading of it in a company of young men some forty years ago are vividly recollected, but only two passages are remembered. The first,

Night follows day, and day succeeds to night,
has never been contradicted. The second,

Sure never was the like heard of before in Boston,
though not so measured and harmonious, was
equally applauded.

* This author, Thomas Godfrey, was the son of the inventor of the quadrant; and wrote his poem, *The Prince of Parthia*, at the age of twenty-two.

The Contrast ranks first in point of time of all American plays, which had been performed by players. It is extremely deficient in plot, dialogue, or incident, but has some marking in the characters, and in that of Jonathan, played by Wignell, a degree of humour, and knowledge of what is termed Yankee dialect, which, in the hands of a favourite performer, was relished by an audience gratified by the appearance of home manufacture—a feeling which was soon exchanged for a most discouraging predilection for foreign articles, and contempt for every literary home-made effort. This comedy was given by the author to Wignell, who published it in 1790 by subscription. It was coldly received in the closet; yet Jonathan the First has, perhaps, not been surpassed by any of his successors. He was the principal character, strictly speaking, the only character. We will give a specimen of Jonathan; and select his description of a play-house in New-York, and the performance of *The School for Scandal*, and *The Poor Soldier*.

Jenny. So, Mr. Jonathan, I hear you were at the play last night.

Jon. At the play! Why, do you think I went to the devil's drawing-room?

Jenny. The devil's drawing-room?

Jon. Yes: why aint cards and dice the devil's device? And the play-house the shop where the devil hangs out the vanities of the world upon the tenter-hooks of temptation? I believe you have not heard how they were acting the old boy one night, and the wicked one came among them, sure enough; and went right off in a storm, and carried one-quarter of the play-house with him. Oh, no, no, no! You won't catch me at a play-house, I warrant you.

To the question, "Where were you about six o'clock?" he answers,

Why I went to see one Mr. Morrison, the *hocus pocus* man ; they said as how he could eat a case-knife. As I was going about here and there to find it, [the place] I saw a great crowd of folks going into a long entry, that had lanterns over the door : so I asked a man if that was the place where they played *hocus pocus* ? He was a very civil kind of a man, though he did speak like the Hessians ; he lifted up his eyes and said, " They play *hocus pocus* tricks enough there, got knows, mine friend." So I went right in, and they shewed me away clean up to the garret, just like a meeting-house gallery. And so I saw a power of topping folks, all sitting round in little cabins just like father's corn-crib, and then there was such a squeaking of the fiddles, and such a tarnal blaze with the lights, my head was near turned. At length people that sat near me set up such a hissing—hiss—like so many mad cats, and then they went thump, thump, thump, just like our Peleg thrashing wheat, and stamp away just like the nation, and called out for one Mr. Langolee—I suppose he helps act the tricks.

Jenny. Well, and what did you do all this time ?

Jon. Gor, I—I liked the fun, and so I thumpt away, and hissed as lustily as the best of them. One sailor-looking man that sat by me, seeing me stamp, and knowing I was a cute fellow, because I could make a roaring noise, clapped me on the shoulder and said, " You are a d—d hearty cock, smite my timbers." I told him so I was, but he needn't swear so and make use of such wicked words.

Jenny. Did you see the man with his tricks ?

Jon. Why, I vow, as I was looking out for him, they lifted up a great green cloth, and let us look right into the next neighbour's house. Have you a good many houses in New-York made in that 'ere way ?

Jenny. Not many. But did you see the family ?

Jon. Yes, swamp it, I seed the family.

Jenny. Well, and how did you like them ?

Jon. Why, I vow, they were pretty much like other families ; there was a poor good-natured curse of a husband, and a sad ranti-pole of a wife.

Jenny. But did you see no other folks ?

Jon. Yes. There was one youngster, they called him Mr. Joseph ; he talked as sober and as pious as a minister ; but, like some ministers that I know, he was a sly tike in his heart, for all

that ; he was going to ask a young woman to spark it with him, and—the Lord have mercy on my soul—she was another man's wife.

Jenny. And did you see any more folks ?

Jon. Why they came on as thick as mustard. For my part I thought the house was haunted. There was a soldier fellow that talked about his row-de-dow-dow, and courted a young woman ; but of all the cute folk I saw, I liked one little fellow—he had red hair, and a little round plump face like mine, only not altogether so handsome. His name was Darby—that was his baptizing name—his other name I forget. Oh ! it was Wig—Wag—Wag-all—Darby Wagall—pray, do you know him ? I should like to take a sling with him, or a drop of cider with a pepper-pod in it, to make it warm and comfortable.

Jenny. I can't say I have that pleasure.

Jon. I wish you did, he's a cute fellow. But there was one thing I didn't like in that Mr. Darby, and that was, he was afraid of some of them 'ere shooting irons, such as your troopers wear on training days. Now I'm a true-born Yankee American son of liberty, and I never was afraid of a gun yet in all my life.

Jenny tells him he “was certainly at the play-house,” and he cries, “Marcy on my soul ! Did I see the wicked players ? Mayhap that 'ere Darby, that I liked so, was the old serpent himself, and had his cloven foot in his pocket. Why, I vow, now I come to think on't, the candle seemed to burn blue, and I'm sure, where I sat, it smelt tar-nally of brimstone.”

He proceeds to tell of his demanding his money, because he had not seen the show ; “the dogs a bit of a sight have I seen, unless you call listening to people's private business a sight.”

Royal Tyler, Esq., was a native of Massachusetts, received a liberal education, studied law, and served as an officer in quelling Shea's insurrection. After this, he wrote *The Contrast* and

May Day. Returning to Massachusetts, he became involved in pecuniary difficulties, and retired to Vermont, then a *new country*. He settled at Brattleborough, and grew with the state. He became a judge, and finally chief-justice. Besides the above comedy and farce, he wrote and published a novel, called *The Algerine Captives*, and several poems. He died in the year 1824.

Such is the beginning of the American theatre, as connected with our literature, and it is as connected with literature, manners, and morals, that its history is valuable. We prefer the dialogue of *A Cure for the Spleen*, mentioned in chapter the fourth, to that of *The Contrast*. It is more dramatic, though not intended for the stage.

In McLean's Journal of March 21st, will be found the following note from the managers, which marks public feeling at the time on the subjects of France and England. "It is with real concern the subscribers learn that a character in *The Poor Soldier* has given umbrage to any frequenters of the theatre: it is both their duty and invariable study to please, not to offend, as a proof of which, they respectfully inform the public, they have made such alterations in the part alluded to as they trust will do away every shadow of offence." The part alluded to was *Bagatelle*.

It is well known that the *Frenchman* has, in English farce and comedy, been ever the butt of John Bull's ridicule and contempt. One legitimate proof of his inferiority and source of merri-

ment at his expense, is the fact that he does not speak good English; this, with various other equally good reasons, may be given as proofs that he was, and is, a character only to be laughed at, and such was a portion of English education. Now, Jonathan began to feel, some time before, that all the maxims of John Bull were not as true as Holy Writ, and having received aid from France and Frenchmen in the late struggle with England, and, moreover, having had ocular demonstration that one Englishman cannot *always* whip three Frenchmen, took it into his head that he ought not to suffer Monsieur *Bag-and-tail* to be made a laughing-stock on the American stage; and the managers were obliged, as we see, to apologize, and make such alterations as appeased their Yankee audience.

On the 5th of May, *The Contrast*, for the fourth time, and *Widow's Vows*, were performed for the "benefit of the unfortunate sufferers by the fire in Boston."

The theatre closed the 9th of June. The benefits had proved very unsuccessful. Hallam tried three nights before he made a benefit, or gave up the attempting to make one.

From New-York, Hallam and Henry, with their company, went to Baltimore, where they opened a new theatre, on the 16th August, 1786.

Philadelphia appears to have been shunned at this time: probably the hostility against the drama was too strong to admit of a visit, for, on

the 21st of December, the company were again in New-York, and opened the theatre in John Street. On this occasion the managers announced that, "in compliance with the wish of many respectable patrons of the theatre, there would be only two nights' performance in a week." *Since* then we have had four large theatres, and a circus in which farces are performed, all open six nights in the week.

The company now consisted of Messrs. Hallam, Henry, Biddle, Harper, Morris, Wignell, Wools, Heard, Macpherson, and Ryan, the prompter ; Mesdames Henry, Morris, Harper, Sewell, and Miss Tuke.

In April, the performers were again taking benefits, and the 7th of the month, Henry brought out for his wife's benefit a pageant entitled *The Convention, or the Columbian Father*, which had little other effect than to remind the public that two years before (March, 1785,) she had played under the denomination of "a gentlewoman" for Henry's benefit, and to draw forth a bitter remark in Greenleaf's Journal, that she had so done to serve a *brother* and *lover*. This person was the youngest of the four Miss Storers, and the second who enjoyed the name of Mrs. Henry. The older sisters, who had been on the stage in New-York, had disappeared from before the American public. Two of them afterwards reappeared as Mrs. Mechler and Mrs. Hogg. The three sisters came to America in the year 1767, having previously joined

the company in Jamaica, with an elder sister, who was lost in the voyage to America (with the ship), as before-mentioned. They were passengers in a vessel from Jamaica, which took fire at sea: the crew and passengers, with the one exception, were saved by the boats, and landed at Newport, Rhode Island.

Mr. Harper was a very useful man in the American company at this time, and personated characters of every description, from Charles Surface to Falstaff. In the latter part he gave great satisfaction. He was unrivalled, for there was no other and had been no other Falstaff seen on this side the Atlantic. About this time, April 14th, 1787, he had advertised the first part of Henry IV. for his benefit, but it was postponed from day to day in consequence of what has been called the *Doctors' Mob*. Some students of anatomy and young surgeons had incautiously left the windows of a dissecting-room at the Hospital in such a situation, that boys at play about the building, at that time out of town, saw the subjects in a mutilated state. They communicated their horror to others, and a mob of men and boys assembled, broke into the house, and were so inflamed by the objects they discovered and the inferences they drew from them, that they threatened destruction to all surgeons. The most obnoxious of the profession were sheltered from their fury by being placed in the jail, and even then could only be protected by the armed militia. It was several days

before the tumult was appeased sufficiently to allow Falstaff and Hotspur to meet at Shrewsbury.

The theatre was closed on the 28th of May, and the company proceeded to Philadelphia. The benefits had been unsuccessful. Even Wignell, the great favourite, was obliged to call upon a writer to plead for him, as one who was an object of commiseration from long-continued sickness. One of the company, Macpherson, either could not raise the wind for a voyage to Philadelphia, or had created some of those ties which are too strong to admit of change of place. He advertised lectures on heads, and endeavoured to excite the sympathy of the public as a father, who was unable to discharge the debts he had unavoidably contracted. Wignell appeared next year, restored to health and in the full tide of popular favour; of Macpherson, we never hear more.

CHAPTER VII.

Strollers — Authorship for the Stage — Managers — Dubellamy — Henry — Hallam — First Comedy accepted and delayed — Second brought out — The Father of an only Child — *Dramatis Personæ* — Darby's Return — Washington.

WHEN Kemble, or his sister Siddons, or his rival Cooke, went the round of the provincial theatres, were they not strollers? But they played in the theatres royal of Bath, or Liverpool, or Manchester. And the Douglasses and Hallams played in his majesty's theatres of the colonies by royal authority, delegated to the royal governors. If to be his majesty's servants gave dignity to the first, the same equivocal dignity belongs to the second. In the time of feudal barbarism, the musician, the poet, and the player, could only be protected from the violence of the robber-baron by becoming the servant of the baron-robber, or of his liege-lord the king. This is the origin of the honourable distinction enjoyed by the players of the London and other licensed English theatres. The barons no longer entertaining minstrels, or *trouveurs*, or *histriions*, or *jongleurs* (jugglers), or players, and the law considering the unpatronised artist as a vagabond, the king became sole master of the players, and all established theatres were theatres royal.

Happily, the time is approaching when the painter, the musician, the poet, and the player,

may instruct or amuse the public without being called to account by the constable. It has not yet arrived in every part of the United States. The poems of Milton or Shakspeare, or the picture on which, as on the page of history, the painter has written lessons of eternal truth, teaching love to God and man, are all subjects of fine or tax, and are stigmatized as shows, and their exhibitors or reciters as showmen or strollers, in some portions of our country. If merely moving from place to place for the purpose of exercising a calling makes that calling disreputable, and remaining in one spot for its exercise is dignified, it would seem to follow that the judge who goes the circuit — the lawyer who travels from court-house to court-house, from county to county — the preacher who obeys the call of those who want a teacher — the missionary who carries instruction to the ignorant who do not call for it, or the bishop who moves through his diocess to confirm and consecrate, are all in this respect as undignified as the player; and the cobbler, who sits from the first of January to the last of December in his stall, is the most dignified personage that can well be imagined. Let us return to players, plays, and the authors of plays.

About the end of summer, in the year 1787, the writer returned home, after a residence of more than three years in London. These years were those which occur between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, a portion of life fraught with

danger to all. The theatre had been his delight, and he had seen all the great performers on the English stage at that period, and as many plays as his finances permitted. The theatres of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket, had been visited for the sake of the performances exhibited, and not as scenes of dissipation. All Shakspeare's acting plays, and many others, especially the new pieces of the day, had been before him, represented by the immediate successors, and some of the cotemporaries of Garrick.

Young, and filled with these recollections, he first saw the American company on his return, performing upon the stage where, as a boy, he had witnessed the representations of Shakspeare, Home, and Cumberland, by the officers of his Britannic majesty, during the cessations of their military exertions for suppressing the rebellion. He heard of the success of *The Contrast*, and although it was already put on the shelf of the prompter, or buried in his travelling chest, the praises bestowed upon it lit up the inflammable material brought from abroad, and a comedy in five acts was written in a few weeks.

A Yankee servant, a travelled American, an officer in the late revolutionary army, a fop, such as fops then were in New-York, an old gentleman and his two daughters, one of course lively and the other serious, formed the *dramatis personæ*. The play was read to critics as young and ignorant as the author, and praised to his heart's

content. It has long slept in the tomb of the Capulets, and fortunately no traces remain of its merits or demerits.

Having written a play, how was the author to approach those awful personages, the managers? He had never been behind the scenes of a theatre. His ideas of managers were those formed from books; and Garrick, and Colman, and Sheridan, the arbiters of the fate of authors, and famed themselves for wit and learning, invested all managers with a splendour little short of regal dignity. He had not read that letter of Garrick to Colman, which says, "I know that fools may be, and that many fools have been, managers." Little did the young author know how much these redoubted American kings wished for alliance with the citizens, and how gladly they would meet any overtures from the son of a merchant. In fact, he knew nothing of the theatre, its managers, or its actors, but the mere outside.

As a medium of communication between the play-writer and the managers, a man was pointed out, who had for a time been of some consequence on the London boards, and now resided under another name in New-York. This was the Dubellamy of the English stage, a first singer and *walking-gentleman*. He was now past his meridian, but still a handsome man, and was found sufficiently easy of access and full of the courtesy of the old school. A meeting was arranged at the City Tavern, and a bottle of Madeira discussed

with the merits of this first-born of a would-be author. The wine was praised, and the play was praised—the first, perhaps, made the second tolerable—that must be good which can repay a man of the world for listening to an author who reads his own play. Unless the work has uncommon merit, the listener's task is a hard one. The play was read with "good emphasis and discretion," in the reader's opinion, and apparently in that of the veteran Dubellamy. It was "excellent, wanted a little pruning, but far less than *She Stoops to Conquer*, when Goldsmith read it to us in the green-room." Delightful draughts of flattery, from a man who had heard and seen the author of the Vicar of Wakefield, and *She Stoops to Conquer*! The comedy was called by the mawkish title of *The Modest Soldier, or Love in New-York*.

An introduction to the managers was the next step; and a reading by appointment at Henry's house, to Messrs. Hallam and Henry and Mrs. Henry. The lady was polite, Henry complimented, Hallam was shy and silent.

Henry being the acting manager, several interviews with him succeeded. On one occasion the author of the comedy, calling on him, was ushered into his chamber by Mrs. Henry, and found him extended on a field-bed and apparently unable to rise. His gigantic figure appeared larger than ever, his face was flushed with fever, and the lower part covered by beard. His disease was

gout, and he occasionally expressed his suffering, but spoke cheerfully, and even jocosely. The same evening he played the Youthful Lover in *The Clandestine Marriage*, and his morning visiter saw him in apparent health and elegantly apparelled, while his brother manager Hallam, a harlequin in activity, represented Lord Ogilby, a character he had seen performed by King at Drury Lane, and mimicked those twitches and excruciating pains which Henry, feeling in reality, covered with the mask of apparent ease and enjoyment. Such is one picture of theatrical life, and by no means the most extraordinary.

Henry was the only actor in America who kept a carriage. It was in the form of a coach, but very small, just sufficient to carry himself and wife to the theatre; it was drawn by one horse and driven by a black boy. Aware of the jealousy towards players, and that it would be said he *kept a coach*, he had caused to be painted on the doors, in the manner of those coats of arms which the aristocracy of Europe display, *two crutches* in heraldic fashion, with the motto, "*This or these.*" It is remembered that Henry said, "I put this marked motto and device on my carriage to prevent any impertinent remarks on an actor keeping his coach. The wits would have taken care to forget that the actor could not walk."

The ride was not a long one for the actor and actress from their house to the theatre in John Street, as he lived in Fair Street (now Fulton),

between Nassau Street and Broadway, in the same two-story brick house painted yellow in which Hodgkinson resided for some years. Mrs. Henry used to go ready dressed for the character she was to play, and shut up in a little box-like vehicle. This residence in Fair Street was still more convenient for Hodgkinson's theatrical business, as a gate opened (and still opens) from the back of the house, directly opposite Theatre Alley.

The comedy of the young author was accepted and cast, but after some delays its appearance was by agreement deferred until the next winter, as the benefits were soon to commence, previously to the company's leaving the city. While on this subject it is best to despatch it. The next season alterations were proposed and made to suit Mrs. Henry. The bringing out was still put off, and it was only time and experience that explained to the candidate for fame the mystery of his disappointment. There was no part suited to Henry, and he was the acting and efficient manager. There was no part suited to his wife, and she was another efficient manager. The best man's part was intended for Wignell. The best woman's part was cast by the author for Mrs. Morris, as the representative of the lively comedy lady. The acting manager and his manager were jealous of and at variance with Hallam and Wignell, and Mrs. Morris was patronised by Wignell.

These were mysteries unthought of by the young author, who, buoyed up by hope and expectation,

anticipating the success of this much-praised comedy, proceeded to write a second, in which, without design, one part was suited to Henry, another did not displease his wife, and the lively lady was evidently inferior to the character assigned to the manager's lady. This second comedy was seized with avidity by Henry. The author was easily persuaded to let the second come out first; and the first was ultimately consigned to oblivion, no doubt a merited oblivion, the flattery of Dubellamy, Hallam, Henry, and the rest, notwithstanding.

About this time Mr. Samuel Low, in the Bank of New-York, then the only bank of the city, or state, wrote a comedy, which was rejected by the managers, and published for their justification by the author.

On the 13th June, 1788, Mr. Kenna, who with his wife had made a part of the old American company, opened a theatre at Newbern, North Carolina, with the tragedy of *Isabella*, Mrs. Kenna playing the heroine; and in July, the same corps opened a theatre in Wilmington.

On the 7th of September, 1789, the second comedy above mentioned was brought out. It was called *The Father*. It had been studied carefully, was played correctly, and received with great applause by the citizens. It was printed, and was the first play which had come from the American press, as performed by regular comedians. It was immediately reprinted in Halifax, and some years afterwards another edition was published, with an

addition to the title of the words *of an Only Child*.

This play was well performed. The serious or pathetic parts received full support from Henry, who played the Father, and from Mrs. Henry, who was the heroine. Wignell added to his reputation as a comic actor. The comedy was performed until the benefits commenced, in about three weeks after its appearance. The author made an attempt to soften the asperities which war had created, and to reconcile his countrymen to their British brethren. When the American company ceased to be "one and indivisible"—when Wignell, who was the great favourite of the laughter-loving, seceded, the play was laid aside. Its merits have never entitled it to revival.

As *The Father of an Only Child* may claim some attention, from the circumstance that it was the first drama which issued from the press after the revolution—the first American play printed that had been performed in a regular theatre—and the first performed of the many afterwards written by its author, we will give the cast of it, and take the opportunity of noticing the characters and their representatives.

Colonel Campbell, "the father of an only child," was played by Mr. Henry. The colonel, like several of our patriotic officers of 1775, is supposed to have been a physician previous to taking up the sword. When a student at Edinburgh, he had clandestinely married, lost his wife, and, when he

returned home, left his only child with a friend, who had educated him and placed him in the British army under his own name. Campbell supposes he was killed at Bunker's Hill, and now arrives in New-York to visit two sisters, his wards. Racket, played by Mr. Hallam, had married one of these sisters, and is a dissipated and of course unhappy man and bad husband. In his house the scene lies, and the unities are fully observed. Rusport, played by Mr. Biddle, is an impostor, pretending to be an officer in the English army, but really the fugitive servant of Haller, played by Mr. Harper, who proves to be the son of the colonel, supposed to have fallen in battle. Tattle, played by Mr. Wignell, is the family physician and Marplot of the piece. Campley, played by Mr. Wools, is a companion of Haller's ; Platoon, Mr. Ryan, is a kind of poor Corporal Trim to Colonel Campbell ; Jacob, Mr. Lake, is a German soldier, left behind by the auxiliaries of England. Such are the males. Mrs. Racket, played by Mrs. Morris, encourages the addresses of Rusport in jest, and excites her husband's jealousy. Caroline, played by Mrs. Henry, had met Haller in Halifax and been betrothed to him, and discovers to Campbell that his son was not killed at Bunker's Hill, but is only lost to him by subsequent events, as is suspected by her. Mrs. Grenade, played by Mrs. Harper, and Susannah, by Miss Tuke, thicken the plot and serve to unravel it. Haller detects his servant, discovers that he is somebody else and not him-

self, and is married to Caroline, and all the rest ends as a decent play ought to do. Such were the characters; of their representatives a few words.

Mr. John Henry was full six feet in height, and had been uncommonly handsome. He played Othello better, we believe, than any man had done before him in America; it is recorded that he wore "the uniform of a British general officer, his face black, and hair woolly." This must not appear strange, however improper, for the writer saw John Kemble, in 1786-7, play the Moor, (Mrs. Siddons the Desdemona) in a suit of modern military of scarlet and gold lace, coat, waistcoat, and breeches; he wore white silk stockings, his face was black, and his hair (not woolly, but long and black) was queued in the military fashion of the day. Bensley played Iago, and very well, in a modern uniform of blue and red. Thus Mr. Henry dressed in the manner of his contemporaries. He was at this time a victim to the gout. His Irishmen were very fine, and he had great merit in serious and pathetic fathers. Of the merits of Mr. Hallam we have repeatedly spoken. In person he was of middle stature or above, thin, straight, and well taught as a dancer and fencer. In learning the latter accomplishment, he had received a hurt in the corner of one of his eyes, which gave a slight cast, a scarcely perceptible but odd expression to it in some points of view; generally, his face was well adapted to his profession, particularly in comedy. Biddle was an actor merely decent. Harper, who

was then considered handsome, was marked with the small-pox, had expressive eyes, and fine teeth. Wools, formerly the singer of the company, was now old, and of little value as a player; he was a gentlemanly, modest, and honest man. Wignell was a man below the ordinary height, with a slight stoop of the shoulders; he was athletic, with handsomely formed lower extremities, the knees a little curved outwards, and feet remarkably small. His large blue eyes were rich in expression, and his comedy was luxuriant in humour, but always faithful to his author. He was a comic actor, not a buffoon. He was a clown who did not speak more than was set down in his part. The vice of impudently altering and adding to an author has always existed and is increasing in proportion to the increase of our theatres and the decline of the Drama. In proportion as plays are worthless, players will foist in their own nonsense to amuse the auditors of worthless plays; but if the Drama is to be supported or revived, the practice must meet the reprehension of managers and audience. Mr. Wignell's taste was too good to permit his falling into such an error. Ryan was passable, and Lake merely bearable. Ryan was the prompter, and occasionally played small parts. Another of the name (Dennis Ryan), had performed in New-York in 1781-2, with the officers of the British army.

Mrs. Morris, the fine lady of the company, was a tall and elegant woman, and her acting very

spirited. Mrs. Henry was a very small, fair, woman, with much talent both for speaking and singing, and though her figure gave her no aid, her spirit and judgment made her tragedy effective. Mrs. Harper was a woman of no personal beauty, but played the old women of comedy respectably. Miss Tuke was young, comely, and awkward. She afterwards, as Mrs. Hallam, became an actress of merit, and improved in beauty and elegance.

For the reasons above given we may be excused if we dwell a little longer on this comedy. The American Quarterly Review thus speaks of it:—"The plot is sufficiently dramatic to carry an interest throughout; the characters are well drawn, and well employed, and the dialogue possesses what is indispensable to genuine comedy, a brief terseness and unstudied ease, which few of the productions of the present era afford."

As we have given a specimen of the first American comedy that was performed by professed actors, and it is selected as a fair specimen, likewise, by the editor of the New England Magazine, we will give a short scene from the second, as selected by the American Quarterly Review.

Enter TATTLE, to RACKET, MRS. RACKET, and RUSPORT.

Tat. Oh, Racket, my dear fellow, how d'ye do?

Rack. So, another infernal coxcomb!

Tat. What's the matter? You don't seem well. How d'ye do, ma'am? Your servant, sir (*to Rusport*). Racket, you have not introduced me to this gentleman.

Rack. Captain Rusport, this is my friend Doctor Tattle.

Tat. Yes, sir, Tattle—Terebrate Tattle, M.D.

Rack. Doctor, this is Captain Rusport, just arrived in the last packet from Halifax.

Tat. How d'ye do, sir? I'm very glad to see you, indeed. Very fine potatoes in Halifax. Racket! this way. Here, just come from abroad. You'll recommend me.

Rack. If he wants a physician, I certainly will (*half aside*), in the full hope that you will poison him.

Tat. Thank you! thank you! Servant, ma'am. Fine weather, ha? A little rainy, but that's good for the country. A fine season for coughs and colds, sir (*to Rusport*). O, Racket, my dear fellow, I had forgot that I heard of your accident. No great harm done, I perceive. What a tremendous fall you must have had—precipitated from the scaffolding of a three-story house, and your *os parietale* brought in contact with the pavement, while your heels were suspended in the air, entangled in a mason's ladder.

Rack. Pooh! pooh! I broke my nose.

Tat. Is that all! Why I heard—so, so—only a contusion on the *pons nasi*. I was called up to a curious case last evening.

Rack. Then I'm off. (*While Tattle is speaking, Racket goes, and Rusport and Mrs. Racket retire laughing*).

Tat. Very curious case indeed. I had just finished my studies for the evening, smoked out my last cigar, and got comfortably in bed. Pretty late. Very dark. Monstrous dark. Cursed cold. Monstrous cold for the season. Very often the case with us of the faculty; called up at all times and seasons. Used to be so when I was a student in Paris. Called up one night to a dancing master, who had his scull most elegantly fractured, his leg most beautifully broke, and the finest dislocation of the shoulder I ever witnessed. I soon put his shoulder in state to draw the bow again, and his leg to caper to the sounds it might draw from his kit, violin, or fiddle; as for his head, a dancing master's head, ma'am (*looking round*), head, head. Oh, there you are, are you? I beg your pardon, I thought you were by me. (*Follows them*). So you see, ma'am, as I was saying, I was called up last night to witness the most curious case (*they avoid him, he follows*), curious case. The bone of the right thigh—(*Racket re-enters*).

Rack. So, the doctor is at it still.

Tat. Right thigh—I am glad you have come to hear it, Racket. The bone of the right thigh. (*Racket turns from him*). The bone of the right thigh, ma'am. (*She turns away*). Curious case; the bone of the right thigh, captain.

Rusp. You must have gained great credit by that cure, doctor.

Tat. Cure? Sir! What? O, you mean the dancing-master!

I can assure you, I am sought for. I have a pretty practice, considering the partiality of the people of this country for old women's prescriptions.

Notoriety being mentioned—

Mrs. Rack. Notoriety, let me tell you, is often a sure passport to wealth.

Tat. Very true, ma'am; did I ever tell you—

Rack. A man becomes notorious by actions which bring him to the pillory or the gallows.

Tat. Very true, sir. You've heard me say, perhaps—

Mrs. Rack. In that case the stock of notoriety acquired can be of little service, as the subject of it is launched into eternity before he has an opportunity of trading upon his capital.

Tat. Very good, ma'am, capital! Did I ever—*(she retires with Rusport)*. Racket, did I ever tell you of the child that—

Rack. That swallowed the pap-spoon? Yes, yes, you told me that.

Tat. Pap-spoon? Swallowed? Pap-spoon? I never heard of such a case,—and yet it might,—and yet—no—no—I mean the case of the infant that broke—

Rack. Yes, yes, you told me that.

Tat. There is an East Indian nabob just arrived who has a cursed cachetic habit—

Rack. True, true,—he has—he has; but, doctor, how goes on your matrimonial negotiation?

Tat. My landlady—

Rack. Almost married,—ha? Miss Gingham has consented?

Tat. A clever old woman—good old soul.

Rack. But you don't think of marrying her?

Tat. Ha, ha! Good, good! Poor old soul, she is very much affected with—

Rack. But Miss Gingham?

Tat. Pshaw! what's Miss Gingham to a fine case of bilious fever?

The doctor having left them, it is observed that he had travelled France, Italy, and Germany, in pursuit of science.

Mrs. Rack. But science travelled faster than he did, and cruelly eluded his pursuit. Poor doctor! The few ideas he has are al-

ways travelling post, his head is like New-York on May day, *all the furniture wandering.*

When Wignell took his benefit this year, he requested something from the author of *The Father of an Only Child*, and the character of Darby in *The Poor Soldier*, in which he was as popular in America as Edwin was in England, suggested an Interlude, in which Darby, after various adventures in Europe and in the United States, returns to Ireland and recounts the sights he had seen. This trifle was called *Darby's Return*, and was for years extremely popular, and several times published. The remembrance of this performance is rendered pleasing from the recollection of the pleasure evinced by the first president of the United States, the immortal Washington, who attended its representation. The eyes of the audience were frequently bent on his countenance, and to watch the emotions produced by any particular passage upon him was the simultaneous employment of all. When Wignell, as Darby, recounts what had befallen him in America, in New-York, at the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and the inauguration of the president, the interest expressed by the audience in the looks and the changes of countenance of this great man became intense. He smiled at these lines, alluding to the change in the government—

There too I saw some mighty pretty shows ;
A revolution, without blood or blows,

For, as I understood, the cunning elves,
The people all revolted from themselves.

But at the lines—

A man who fought to free the land from wo,
Like me, had left his farm, a-soldiering to go;
But having gain'd his point, he had, *like me*,
Return'd his own potato ground to see.
But there he could not rest. With one accord
He's called to be a kind of—not a lord—
I don't know what, he's not a *great man*, sure,
For poor men love him just as he were poor.
They love like a father or a brother,

DERMOT.

As we poor Irishmen love one another.

The president looked serious ; and when Kathleen asked,

How looked he, Darby ? Was he short or tall ?

his countenance showed embarrassment, from the expectation of one of those eulogiums which he had been obliged to hear on many public occasions, and which must doubtless have been a severe trial to his feelings ; but Darby's answer that he had *not seen him*, because he had mistaken a man " all lace and glitter, botherum and shine," for him, until all the show had passed, relieved the hero from apprehension of further personality, and he indulged in that which was with him extremely rare, a hearty laugh.

The plays and farces above-mentioned, the first efforts of our dramatists, were strictly local. Mr.

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Tyler, in his *Contrast* and some later writers for the stage, seem to have thought that a Yankee character, a Jonathan, stamped the piece as American, forgetting that a clown is not the type of the nation he belongs to. It may here be a fit subject of inquiry how far we ought to wish for a national drama, distinct from that of our English forefathers, meaning the works of the dramatists before the restoration of Charles the Second. The plays of Shakspeare, and Jonson, and Ford, and Marlowe, of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Wycherly, and all the old poets of the drama, are ours, as much ours, being the descendants of Englishmen, as if our fathers had never left the country in which they were written. We say the same of the philosophy of Milton, and Locke, and Newton. Old English literature, as well as that of remote antiquity on which it is founded, is the basis on which we build, and is an integral part of our mental existence. Inasmuch as we may hereafter deviate from the models left us by our ancestors, it will only be, as we hope, in a more severe and manly character, induced by our republican institutions, and approaching the high tone of the Greek drama. A character created by our free government, and the absence of debasing aristocratic grades in our society, already marks our travellers in every European country they visit. Surely, if any people on earth can hope to rival the works of Sophocles and Euripides, it is that country which is destined

to look back to the annals of long past ages for a record that ever a slave or a master polluted her soil. A people literally self-governed, and guided by the experience and accumulated science of Asia, and Africa, and Europe, must appreciate liberty and feel patriotism as no other people ever did. But before our drama can approach the wished-for character, our theatres must be placed in other hands, or so controlled by the enlightened portion of the public that the accumulation of money shall not be the object of their directors.

Milton felt as a republican, and in his dramas wrote like a Greek. When the dramatists of France attempted to rear a stage on the model of Greece, the manners of a court and the effects of monarchy upon the people counteracted the effort, and, with some exceptions, rendered the works of their poets feeble, unnatural, and consequently tedious. The translations and imitations of the French tragedy brought on the English stage are contemptible.

We find the following observations, from the pen of a popular American writer*, so much to the purpose, that we beg leave to insert them. He is speaking (see No. 2, *American Quarterly Review*) of a national drama. "By a national drama, we mean, not merely a class of dramatic productions, written by Americans, but one appealing directly to the national feeling—founded upon domestic incidents—illustrating or satirizing domestic man-

* James K. Paulding, Esq.

ners, and, above all, displaying a generous chivalry in the maintenance and vindication of those great and illustrious peculiarities of situation and character by which we are distinguished from all other nations. We do not hesitate to say, that, next to the interests of eternal truth, there is no object more worthy the exercise of the highest attributes of mind than that of administering to the just pride of national character, inspiring a feeling for national glory, and inculcating a love of country."

The first efforts at dramatic literature in this country were wild, the essays of youth, not sufficiently instructed in any thing, and deficient in literary education; and though they were received favourably by a people beginning to feel that they were called to a new state of existence, and wishing a literature identified with themselves, and distinct from that of Europe, yet both the dramatists and the people they addressed had not sufficiently matured their notions of the result of the great political changes which had taken place, to know how far to assert independence in literature or government, or how far to imitate their European ancestors. In the procession on occasion of the adoption of the Federal Constitution, an association of young men, of which the writer was one, called the Philological Society, carried through the streets of New-York a book inscribed *Federal Language*, as if any other than the English lan-

guage, the language of our fathers, the cotemporaries of Hampden and Milton, could be desirable for their sons and the inheritors of their spirit. When the whole character of our literature shall have received the impress of our republican government, when our writers, wherever they may lay the scene or the plot of their works, shall warn mankind of the evils of governments usurped over the people, then our Drama will be national and distinct from that of countries not blessed by liberty of thought.

It is our province to record facts showing the progress of the theatre, and noticing the attempts at improvement, both literary and histrionic, and it shall be attempted with that feeling which we hope may communicate to our labours a spirit conducive to the improvement of our fellow-men, and the correction of those defects which exist in the department of the fine arts of which we treat.

We have taken the opportunity afforded by the comedy of *The Father of an Only Child* to record the personal appearance and merits as comedians of the members of the company who represented it. They soon after went on their southern tour. The benefits, which began on the 21st September, 1789, continued to the 9th December, when the theatre closed. The new pieces brought out this season were, *He Would be a Soldier*, *Choleric Man*, *School for Soldiers*, *The Father*, *Who's the Dupe*,

Inkle and Yarico, Dead Alive, Duplicity, Miser, Toy, Barataria, Prisoner at Large, Critic, Cheats of Scapin, Half an Hour after Supper, Invasion, Air Balloon, Darby's Return. Some of these were got up for benefits, and in so hurried a manner, for want of time or money, as to destroy them. "To revive a play," a wit has said, "is to murder it."

CHAPTER VIII.

1790.—American Company go to Philadelphia—Widow of Malabar—Col. Humphreys—John Martin—Season of 1791-2 in New-York, the last in which the old Company remained the sole possessors of the United States—Ashton—Final separation of Wignell from Hallam, and Henry—Henry and Wignell go to England—Henry brings out Mr. and Mrs. Hodgkinson, and others—Wignell returns with a great Company, and finds the Yellow Fever in Philadelphia, where the Chestnut Street Theatre had been built for him and Reinagle—Hodgkinson, Mrs. Hodgkinson, King, Prigmore, West.

THE company, with the addition to the stock pieces mentioned in the last chapter, and of a female performer, Mrs. Hamilton, who afterwards played the old women of comedy, proceeded to Philadelphia, opened their theatre in January, 1790, and continued playing until spring, when they went to Baltimore, and again returned to Philadelphia, re-opening the theatre in Southwark on the 27th of November, 1790.

During their second visit, the managers brought out a tragedy, translated from the French by Col. David Humphreys, called *The Widow of Malabar*; it was ushered in by a prologue from an abler hand than that of the translator, Judge Trumbull, the author of *McFingall*. This was not a national drama, according to the author above quoted, though given to us by an American. The prologue had a portion of the wit for which *McFingall*

is deservedly celebrated. One line approaches to temerity, alluding to the Indian custom of sacrificing widows to the manes of their husbands—

'Tis better, far, to marry than to burn.

Col. Humphreys and Judge Trumbull belonged to one of those bands of literary pioneers which, with pen instead of pickaxe, let light into the wilderness, and showed to Americans that all knowledge or wit did not reside on the eastern side of the Atlantic. President Dwight, Joel Barlow, Judge Trumbull, Doctor Hopkins, and Col. Humphreys, were fellow-labourers in this work of utility.

David Humphreys was born at Derby, in the state of Connecticut, about the time the first company of players came to Virginia, 1752, and graduated at Yale College in 1767. President Dwight and Judge Trumbull preceded him in the labour of verse-making; and Barlow likewise owed his courage to the success of these gentlemen, and submitted his works to them. Humphreys entered the army of his country at an early period, and continued to serve honourably to the end of the contest for freedom. In 1778, he was aid to Gen. Putnam, whose life he afterwards published, and in 1780, he made one of Washington's aids-de-camp. He was intrusted by his illustrious friend with the standards taken under the capitulation of Cornwallis at Yorktown, and was presented by Congress with a sword. This memorable event, his presenting the standards, was painted by a

Danish artist, when the poet and soldier was in Europe, between 1784 and 1786, as secretary of legation to Mr. Jefferson. On his return, he, with Judge Trumbull, Mr. Barlow, and Doctor Hopkins, published *The Anarchiad*. He resided at Mount Vernon for some time previous to the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and then came with the first president to New-York. To Humphreys has been ascribed some of that anti-republican etiquette which attended the president's levees, and we know that the colonel was attached to other pomp besides that of "glorious war." The president and Senate appointed him ambassador to Madrid, and he fulfilled his honourable duties in Europe until 1802. He resided in Boston some years, and endeavoured to persuade Bernard to bring out a comedy he had laboured on until he thought it worthy of the public—it was extremely unlike those comedies Bernard owed his fame to, but the wary comedian heard the poet read, drank his Madeira, said "very well" now and then—but never brought out the play. Col. Humphreys owes his poetical fame principally to his Address to the Armies, a poem of merit. We owe to him the introduction of the merino breed of sheep into this country. He resided for some years near New-Haven, and died honoured and regretted. About the year 1806, Malbone painted a miniature of him, in his best style, which is, to those who know his style, the highest praise; this is the only true portrait of this amiable man.

In the course of this winter, 1790-1, we find nothing further worth recording but the first appearance of the first person of the male sex born in America, who adopted the stage as a profession. Two females of the name of Tuke had been successively, the one after the death of the other, brought out by Mr. Hallam, but in the present instance a youth, induced by habits of idleness, and the applause bestowed upon his recitations by his idle companions, abandoned the profession chosen for him, and, leaving his native place, New-York, made his debut as Young Norval, on the stage of Philadelphia. He was favourably received, and his destiny sealed. This was John Martin. His friends had intended him for the profession of the law, but what he thought a life of pleasure had allurements which caused their disappointment. He was of fair complexion, middle height, light figure, and played the youthful characters of many tragedies and comedies in a style called respectable, but mere respectability in any of the fine arts is ever associated with mediocrity. Mr. Martin will be hereafter mentioned, as he continued for some years a useful, though not a brilliant, actor. He laboured hard, lived poor, and died young. Such is the lot of hundreds, who see only pleasure in the profession of a player; a profession requiring splendid talents and assiduous application; and, if adopted by one who cannot attain distinction, he is doomed to labour and privations, too often ending in low dissipation,

disease, neglect, and early death. Labour and privation is the lot of the player who possesses distinguished talents and public favour, but the portion of the drudges of a theatre, the pawns of the chess-board, is little short of a sealed doom to a life of poverty, and, if not redeemed by private virtues, of degradation.

Hallam and Henry opened their theatre in John Street, New-York, on the 10th of Oct. 1791. The company now consisted of Hallam, Henry, Wignell, Morris, and Wools, sharers; Harper, Martin, Hammond, Heard, Ryan, Robinson, Durang, Bisset, Biddle, and Macpherson, salaried actors. The females were Mrs. Henry, Mrs. Morris, sharers; Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Rankin, Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Harper, and Miss Tuke, were salaried.

This was the last season that this sharing scheme, first projected in 1752, remained in operation. A person of the name of Ashton made his debut in Hotspur, without any powers except those of voice. He is remembered in the soliloquy when reading the letter, screaming out,

For the love ee bears hour ouse !
Ee shows by this ee loves iz hone barn better
Than ee loves hour ouse.

Of Hammond, Bisset, Macpherson, Mrs. Rankin, Mrs. Gray, and Mrs. Sewell, nothing is remembered.

At the close of this theatrical season, Mr. Thomas Wignell seceded from the old American

company, carrying with him Mr. and Mrs. Morris. Wignell's talents and influence laid the foundation of that theatrical establishment in Philadelphia, which flourished for many years more uniformly, and with actors of more general estimation, as citizens and artists, than the rival institution in New-York, which continued for some time longer to be called the old American Company. Philadelphia and New-York became from this time territories of rival monarchs, who, after mutual invasions and hostile incursions for a short time, found it necessary to divide the United States between them, until other potentates raised independent standards, and every city, town, and village, had its own stage, and its own "king of shreds and patches."

In the year 1792, this important division of the American Company took place. The writer knew, four years before, that discord and jealousy existed between Henry and Wignell. Hallam, who was Wignell's cousin, and had sent him out in 1775, sided with the latter in 1788. Thus the managers, Hallam and Henry, were at variance. Hallam through life professed to be guided by two maxims in the management of a theatre. They were, "keep down the expenses," and "divide and govern." The first may be right according to circumstances, as a general rule it is wrong. The second is always wrong. It is the base resource of the weak to govern by fraud and falsehood, when they find that they have not the ability to

govern by truth and justice. It is the Machiavelian policy of tyrants. Hallam could divide, but could not govern, and the two more powerful minds took the reins of government into their own hands and divided the kingdom. The following statement of the immediate cause of the separation was communicated to the writer by Wignell, in 1802, and in the main agrees with Hallam's account of the transaction. The reader will see where they would necessarily differ, each stating his own case.

By recurring to the early account of the division of shares, it will be seen that the manager had a share as such, and another as performer. Two managers enjoyed the same source of emolument, each having his share as such, and Wignell, knowing himself to be at this time the favourite of the public, aspired to a share in the management and the advantages belonging thereto. Henry had given him repeated promises of taking him into *the firm*; Hallam appearing to wish for the same. In the winter of 1791-2, it had been considered necessary by the sharers to send an agent to England for the purpose of engaging performers. The sharers, it appears, were occasionally called together as a council to the joint kings, and they saw that the American public began to call for more than had satisfied the colonies of England, or the exhausted and jealous states immediately after their independence. In addition to more actors, scene-painters, musicians, and machinists, a better wardrobe was wanted. Wignell requested that

he might be the company's agent, and it had been promised to him. He had in consequence written to his friends, that, after an absence of fifteen years, he should see them again in London. In this stage of the business he had a more than usually violent quarrel with Henry, who threatened him that "his reign should not be long."

In 1792, while the company were playing in Philadelphia, the following paragraph appeared in one of the papers. "We have authority to say that John Henry, one of the managers of the old American Company, will soon embark for England, for the purpose of engaging performers for the company." On seeing this, Wignell called upon Hallam, and asked him if he knew of or had sanctioned that paragraph. He replied, "No." "Who then authorized it?" The reply was, "Henry, I suppose, as it is in his usual way."

Wignell asserted his right to go home as agent, mentioned the promise given to him, and his desire to visit his friends. Henry persisted in his determination to take the business on himself, and, as it appeared by the sequel, had Hallam's assent to the plan. A meeting of the sharers was called to choose their agent for this important mission. When all were assembled, Hallam, we presume, because the oldest manager and sharer, opened the business. He expatiated on the condition of the company, the growth of the country, the demands of the public, the necessity of satisfying these demands, that the company might prevent

opposition; that for these reasons an agent must be sent to England to procure performers, as well as make purchases, and establish such a correspondence as would further their views, concluding with these words, "Mr. Henry is willing to go, and Mr. Wignell is anxious to go. If Mr. Henry goes, we can continue playing, and maintain ourselves. If Mr. Wignell goes, we must shut up."

This shows the importance of Wignell to the company at that time, and the high estimation in which he stood with the public.

He proceeded thus. "This was the first idea I had of Hallam's duplicity, and I immediately saw my situation. I represented to the meeting the promise given to me, and the arrangements I had made in consequence of that promise. I repeated the threat of Mr. Henry to destroy me, and the mode in which I understood he intended to accomplish it, by bringing out an actor to supersede me in my business, which, by keeping me out of the management, he could effect, as, by casting new plays, he could bring a new performer into public favour, and thereby ruin me in my profession. I therefore demanded either to be made a joint partner, purchasing at their own price, and without asking credit, or to be appointed the company's agent. Both demands were positively refused by the two managers, and the meeting of sharers broke up without electing their agent."

The next day another meeting was called, "which," said Wignell, "as I knew all had been

previously determined, I declined to attend." Wignell resigned his situation in the company; Henry was appointed the agent, and soon after embarked.

The plan of a new theatre in Philadelphia, probably long contemplated by many, was now matured without loss of time. Mr. Reinagle, a professor of music, entered into partnership with Wignell. Their friends furnished such additional funds as were necessary. The site of the present theatre in Chestnut Street, not then as now in the centre of the city, was purchased before the opponents of theatrical establishments knew for what purpose it was to be used; and, while an elegant theatre was building, Wignell followed Henry to England with power and inclination to engage such a company and such additional aids as would overwhelm his long-time enemy, Henry, and his ex-friend and cousin, Hallam.

A man by the name of Anderson was associated with Wignell and Reinagle in this scheme, and afterwards acted as their treasurer. He was the financier. He was, as were the managers, from Britain, and was a shrewd man of business. While preparations were making in Philadelphia for the reception of the new company, Wignell was successfully employed in securing all the adventurers of talent that could render his corps effective.

The rival managers were both men of insinuating manners, both experienced in theatrical affairs and theatrical manœuvres, and equally animated by

the desire of success and the desire of inflicting injury.

Wignell engaged and safely landed in America a company more complete and more replete with every species of talent for the establishment of a theatre than could have been contemplated by the most sanguine of his friends. Every thing was to be splendid, every thing was to be new, with the exception of himself and Mr. and Mrs. Morris, the only sharers who had seceded with him.

Fennel, Chalmers, Moreton, Marshall, Harwood, Whitlock, Green, Darley and son, Francis, Bates, Blisset, Warrell, Mrs. Whitlock, Mrs. Oldmixon, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Marshall, Miss Broadhurst, Mrs. Warrell, Miss Willems (afterwards Mrs. Green,) Miss Oldfield, and others of less note, joined to Wignell and Mr. and Mrs. Morris, composed a force that defied opposition. Besides, they had a splendid new theatre, larger and incomparably better than had been seen before in the New World, and every thing appeared to ensure the triumph of Wignell, though Henry had anticipated him by arriving with a strong reinforcement to the old American company, and by taking the field in Philadelphia before him.

But another, an unexpected and more deadly enemy, had likewise taken the field—an enemy that mocked at their painted banners and gilded truncheons, and put to flight their quips, and quirks, and wreathed smiles. Death, in the loathsome form of yellow fever, had established himself

in the beautiful city of Philadelphia, in the citadel which had been prepared for the reception of Mirth and her attendants. This plague had rendered that place a scene of mourning and desolation, in which the inhabitants had prepared to erect the standard of taste and pleasure. All the usual occupations of life had ceased, and the streets were deserted. Bush Hill and Potter's Field, the hospital and the burying-ground, were alone populous. Although Bush Hill is now the seat of business and pleasure, and Potter's Field metamorphosed into one of the most elegant squares of this elegant metropolis, there remain too many monuments of that season of pestilence to need an additional one here. Yellow fever is marked on every record of that day, and Charles Brockden Brown, like another De Foe, has painted the truth of these scenes in the pages of fiction.

Wignell and Reinagle distributed their forces in the states of Delaware and New-Jersey, quarantining them as they could, in farm-houses or taverns, and anxiously awaiting the return of health to the afflicted city. But in the mean time opened the old theatre in Annapolis, which ancient metropolis of Maryland was destined not only to have the first temple to the Muses built within its precincts, the first to have plays acted within its walls by any professional histrionics, a part of the company of William Hallam, but the first to see the efforts and skill of the best and most powerful company that had ever been assembled in this

country. Wignell then opened the Baltimore theatre with his very fine corps, and employed them in that place until the restored health of Philadelphia enabled him to take possession of his headquarters.

We have said that Henry anticipated the arrival of Wignell on his return to America. He had been active in his recruiting service, and prosperous in his voyages. He had visited the provincial theatres of England, engaged efficient performers, and returned to New-York long before Wignell's company arrived, or his new theatre in Philadelphia was ready.

As early as September, 1792, Henry and his recruits arrived at New-York, and immediately proceeded to join Hallam in Philadelphia, who was prepared to open the old theatre in Southwark. Their first play was *The West Indian*, in which Henry's O'Flaherty could only be surpassed by the original, Moody, or his successor, Johnstone. Hodgkinson, so long the admiration of the frequenters of the theatre, made his first appearance before an American audience on this occasion in the character of Belcour.

After a very successful season in the old theatre, Philadelphia, Hallam and Henry opened the theatre, John Street, New-York, on the 28th of January, 1793, with Reynolds' new comedy of *The Dramatist*, and the musical farce of *The Padlock*.

The reinforcement brought from England by

Henry, consisted of Hodgkinson, King, West, Prigmore, West, jun., Robins, Mrs. Hodgkinson, and Miss Brett (afterwards Mrs. King). If we remember that the whole of the old company, except Wignell, Morris, and Mrs. Morris, were still united with Hallam and Henry and their wives (for Hallam had married Miss Tuke), it will be seen that the corps was numerous, and those who remember the principals, know that it was strong in professional art. But insubordination and discord, jealousy and rivalry, were mixed in even an uncommon degree with the body thus brought together. Hallam, who had, fatally for himself and Henry, joined the latter by deserting Wignell, now adhered to his old diabolical maxim of divide and govern, notwithstanding he had found it easier to do the first than the last. There was a cause of discord in the jealousy with which the old members of the company, now feeling as Americans, viewed the new-comers, who on their part considered the Americans as inferiors, a thing of course with all Europeans, the well-informed excepted; and these actors were very far from being well-informed except in the affairs of the stage and green-room. The old members of the company, treated as inferiors by the recruits, stood on the defensive, but had no bond of union. Besides this general cause of discord, there were the usual conflicting claims of the individuals, which were soon perceivable by those not behind the curtain.

Even on the first night of exhibition, Hallam had to come forward before the play began and beg permission for Mr. Henry to read the part of Lord Scratch, as Mr. Prigmore, who was announced for it, positively refused to appear. Henry accordingly read the part, and Prigmore the next day published an insolent tirade, in which he talked of men who,

Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Play such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

Considering the person and occasion, this beautiful passage was probably never more misapplied. The conduct of this weak and ignorant man can only be accounted for by supposing that he had assurance of support from the new corps.

As Henry's recruits came before the public both of Philadelphia and New-York in advance of Wignell's company, they must take precedence of them in this record. And first John Hodgkinson.

Hodgkinson arrived in America on the 6th of September, 1792, at the age of twenty-six, having already passed through more scenes in real life, and played more parts in the mimic life of the stage, than most men even in his profession of changing scenes and varying characters are cast into during a life of protracted existence.

Believing as we do that the stage might be made subservient to the moral improvement of man, and that its productions in very many instances have enlightened the mind and improved the heart, we

shall not conceal the important truth that those persons who have made acting the business of their lives have been in an uncommon degree the slaves of their passions. The causes and the remedy we have mentioned and must mention again. In most works dedicated to the history of the stage, or the biographies of actors, there is a gloss attempted, a false and glittering view of the subject presented to the reader, calculated to do much mischief. The life of an actor is in many instances represented as a life of pleasure, how falsely hundreds could testify. It is a profession of toil and trouble, exposed to mortifications on one hand, and temptations in an uncommon degree on the other. Many rise superior to both; those who fall become the inflictors of misery, and are repaid in bitterness with a tenfold portion of wretchedness. This is not the portion of the actor alone; it belongs to human nature: but until the profession is honoured by its professors and by society, the actor is exposed to this lot more than most men.

In this work we shall have occasion to mention many of both sexes who have been ornaments to their profession, and would have conferred honour on any society; but we shall not varnish the faults or cast a veil over the follies of those who have from any cause degraded a profession in itself as useful as it is liberal. The stage professes to show vice and folly their deformities as in a mirror. The historian of the stage is bound to do the

same, and is as responsible to mankind for the truth and impartiality of his statements as the historian of the state. Nor can the actor claim indulgence from the historian more than any other public man or artist. He who places himself conspicuously before the world becomes accountable to the world for his actions, and must abide the judgment of those whose gaze he has attracted. He is responsible to society, as he is to his Creator, in proportion to the talents intrusted to him. The greater those talents, the greater is his power for good or ill ; the more beneficial or destructive his example. The faults of a man in private life may be veiled, but the man, who thrusts himself forward, and when made an object for the world to admire, then defies the maxims of morality and the decencies of life, can only be made to atone to society by exposure to infamy, and by the details of those miseries, those inevitable miseries, which his conduct entails upon himself and others. All he can ask is, "Nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice."

The real name of Mr. Hodgkinson was Meadowcraft. He received from the care of his parents, who kept a small ale-house in Manchester, more education or schooling than usually falls to the lot of the common or lower classes of people in England. He was taught reading, writing, and ciphering, and made his debut in the drama of life as a pot-boy. In this situation he contrived to obtain some knowledge of fiddling ; his ear was

good and his voice melodious. Fiddling and singing were additional attractions to the ale-house. But it appears that his parents had too just notions of their duty to continue John in this dangerous situation ; they removed him, perhaps too late, to the house of a manufacturer, and bound him apprentice.

There are very few inhabitants of towns but may remember some childish association for performing plays. To such a one this boy owed his first knowledge of that branch of literature, and it may be said that it was the only branch of which he obtained any knowledge. To say that Hodgkinson was a member of a troop of urchins for acting, is, to those who knew him, to say that he was the leader. Idleness, neglect of his master's business, and the deceit consequent upon all clandestine practices, were unfortunately the fruits of his boyish attempts at acting, and of the superiority his fiddling and singing gave him over his companions. This, of course, could not last, and, at the age of fourteen, or between fourteen and fifteen, he ran away from his indentures, his master, and his mother (his father was dead), changed his name from Meadowcraft to Hodgkinson, and commenced a life of adventure, a life which teaches a knowledge of the worst portion of our species, gives unrestrained play to the passions, and, while it sharpens the intellect, obscures the natural sense of moral propriety.

Such was the commencement of this man's life.

Let it not be supposed that we record it as a stigma. On the contrary, we consider it as an excuse for many aberrations; and his having attained a high standing in a very difficult profession, from such a beginning, is a proof of natural endowments and talents of no common kind.

Hodgkinson used to say, that his principal dependence for the success of his scheme of elopement rested upon his knowledge of tunes and songs, which encouraged the hope of being received by some company of players. He had a crown in his pocket, which had been given to him by a traveller, who was pleased with his singing, when on a visit at his mother's alehouse.

He took the road to Bristol, and contrived, by joining a wagoner on the way, to reach an inn in that city, and gain admittance, while yet in the possession of the greater part of his fortune. An opportunity soon presented, to one of his enterprising disposition, for offering himself as a candidate to Mr. Keasebury, the manager of the Bristol theatre, for the honours and emoluments of the stage. "What can you do, my boy?" "I can sing, sir, and play on the fiddle — and I can snuff the candles." Keasebury was pleased with the boy's appearance — and surprised, on trial, at his musical powers. He was retained; and, for the sake of gaining admittance within a theatre, gladly agreed to do any thing, until he could be made of service on the stage. Mr. Keasebury seems never to have thought of doing justice to the boy, his

master, or his parent, by sending him back to the house he had eloped from.

The first attempt of Hodgkinson to speak in public was something like that we have recorded of Hallam. To use his own expression, he "did not know whether he stood on his head or his heels," and the message he was intrusted with was probably not heard, certainly not understood, by the audience. He soon became useful, and, by speaking a few lines now and then, singing in choruses, marching in processions, and snuffing candles, laid the foundation of his future theatrical fortunes. He was not singular in this. Many very excellent actors have had similar beginnings. The material was in him. It is ever a proof of superior powers, or superior virtue, to conquer difficulties, and, from the lower or viler stations appendant on a profession, to arrive at the higher grades of the profession itself.

Most players have had provincial theatres or strolling companies for their schools; but we think it will be found that only those who have had a good, or at least a tolerably good, early education, have arrived at the first rank in their profession. Not to go further back in theatrical history, Garrick, Henderson, Kemble, Siddons, Cooke, Merry, Cooper, Harwood, and other eminent performers, male and female, may be brought in proof. The attainments of Hodgkinson all partook of the imperfections of the provincial school, and were all limited by the deficiency of education and ha-

bits acquired from the associates of early life. His unbounded ambition, great physical powers, and youthful spirits, carried him through every theatrical achievement with eclat. He was ready to attempt any thing, was always above mediocrity, and sometimes attained to excellence, though never in the highest department of the Drama. His low comedy was his true excellence. In that he had gained his highest reputation before leaving England; but he played every thing, from Harlequin to clown, from the fine gentleman of Congreve, or the Vapid of Reynolds, to the boor, the tinker, the cobbler, or the shelly, from the king to the foot-boy — his ambition made him ready to swallow any thing that might keep him before an audience — like Bottom, in *The Midsummer's Night*, he wished to play Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion.

It is not our wish to follow this extraordinary man through the provincial theatres of England, in which he gained that skill which we witnessed in America. His power to please increased yearly, while going the rounds of Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, and other theatrical towns, and he became the favourite actor in comedies, operas, and farces. His eulogist, Carpenter, in *The Mirror of Taste*, says, "Co-ordinate with the rise of his fame and fortune, was the growth of the evils which were fated to endanger the one, and make shipwreck of the other; and his professional success and his

gallantries, running parallel to each other, like the two wheels of a gig, left their marks on every road he travelled."

We may continue his friend's figure, by saying, that while the traces of one wheel were erased as soon as made by the next theatrical gig that followed him, the other, like the wheel of the car which bears the Hindoo idol, crushed the hapless victims who were fascinated by the rider, and left its traces permanently marked by ruin, anguish, and death; while he, apparently as insensible as the triumphant Juggernaut, passed on to immolate another and another.

Munden, afterward so celebrated in London, was then joint manager with Whitlock, in what is called the circuit of the northern towns in England. In their company, Hodgkinson rose to provincial celebrity; but being engaged for the Bath theatre, which was esteemed the next in rank to the London, he left Munden, of whose family he was an inmate, carrying with him the mother of his children, and his nominal wife. At Bath, they were Mr. and Mrs. Hodgkinson. At Bath, Henry engaged Hodgkinson for America, and with him another Mrs. Hodgkinson, whom he found as Miss Brett, of the Bath theatre.

In person, Hodgkinson was five feet ten inches in height, but even at the period we speak of, at the age of twenty-six, he was too fleshy to appear tall, and in a few years became corpulent. He was

strongly and well formed in the neck, shoulders, chest, and arms, but clumsily in the lower limbs, with thick ancles, and knees slightly inclining inward. His face was round, his nose broad and not prominent, his eyes grey, and of unequal sizes, but with large pupils and dark eyelashes. By some accident in early youth, one eye had been injured, as we have had occasion to mention in respect to one of Hallam's, and was smaller than the other, but this was not perceptible on the stage when he played in serious parts, and in the comic, added archness to the expression of his face. His complexion was white, and almost colourless, and his hair dark brown. On the stage, paint is a part of costume; and, at the time of which we write, powder was indispensable as a covering for the hair, on or off the stage, for those who played modern gentlemen, and theatrical heroes of antiquity had the resource of Brutus wigs of any colour.

This physiognomy was capable of varied expression, and, with the unbounded animal spirits of the possessor, and skill in the stage toilette, Hodgkinson passed for handsome, and undoubtedly had the power of expressing every thing but the delicate or sublime. He had great physical strength, and a memory capable of receiving and retaining the words of an author to an extent that was truly astonishing. What is called, in the technical language of the theatre, "a length" is forty lines. A *part* in a play is calculated by the number of *lengths*, and twenty is a long part. Hodgkinson

would read over a new part of twenty lengths, and lay it aside until the night before he was to play it, attending the rehearsals meantime, then sit up pretty late to *study* it, as it is called, and the next morning, at rehearsal, repeat every word, and prompt others. His ambition for applause was inordinate, and he was as rapacious for characters as Bonaparte has since been for kingdoms.

Not content to be an actor, he would, in despite of every thing, be a poet and author. As may be inferred from his want of education and course of life, his ignorance of all beyond theatrical limits was profound. He did not know who was the author of *High Life below Stairs* at the time he played the principal character in the piece. And at a time when he was the delight of the town, the companion of most of our wits, and the soul of our musical societies, he, having made out a *bill* for *poetical recitations*, was sportively asked by Judge Cozine, "Who is that *Anon* you have got in the bill among the poets?" And to the judge's astonishment, he answered in serious earnest and with an air of one showing his reading, "Oh sir, he is one of our first poets."

As an actor he deserved great praise, and was at that time the delight of the New-York audiences. From Jaffier to Dionysius, from Vapid to Shelly, he was the favourite, and was received with unbounded applause. His ear for music was good. He had cultivated the art. He sung both serious and comic songs. From the Haunted Tower to the

Highland Reel, no one pleased so much as Hodgkinson. He had played in the secondary theatres of England with Cooke and Mrs. Siddons in tragedy, and in comedy with Lewis and Munden, Miss Farren and Mrs. Wells. Such was the man and the actor brought from England by John Henry to supplant Wignell in the favour of the public. But the poisoned chalice was destined for his own lips, and those of Hallam. All those characters which had been long considered as the property of himself and partner were usurped by the new comer, and the two kings were not long left in possession of the throne they had refused to share with Thomas Wignell. Such are the decrees of "even-handed justice."

Among the recruits, Mrs. Hodgkinson was only second to her husband in consequence. She had been born to and educated for the stage. She was the daughter of Brett, a singer at Covent Garden and the Haymarket. The first time the writer saw her was in 1784, at the Haymarket theatre, London, as the page in the opera of *The Noble Peasant*. Hodgkinson became acquainted with her at Bath, and brought her to New-York, where they were married by Bishop Moore. She was an amiable woman and good wife. As an actress, in girls and romps she was truly excellent. In high comedy she was far above mediocrity, and even in tragedy she possessed much merit. In Ophelia she was touching in a powerful degree, as her singing gave her advantages in this character which tragic ac-

tresses do not usually possess. Her forte was opera. From her father she had derived instructions; and her husband's practice on the violin continued to improve her in knowledge in this branch of her profession. Her voice, both in speaking and singing, was powerful and sweet.

Mrs. Hodgkinson was very fair, with blue eyes and yellow hair approaching to the flaxen. Her nose was prominent or Roman; her visage oval, and rather long for her stature, which was below the middling. Her general carriage on the stage was suited to the character she performed; and in romps, full of archness, playfulness, and girlish simplicity. As a general actress, she was as valuable in female as her husband was in male characters.

The person next in importance to the Hodgkinsons among the new comers was King. He was uncommonly handsome, but had not the skill that might entitle him to the rank of an artist. He could do nothing but as instructed by Hodgkinson. Sometimes his tall, manly person and fine face, under tuition and drilling, had an effect that might be called imposing. But he was dissipated and negligent of every duty.

Prigmore was a buffoon. He became the comic old man of the company, and, with grimace, antiquated wigs, painted wrinkles and nose, became a favourite for a time of the gods and the groundlings — of those whose praise is censure. We have mentioned his refusal to play the part of Lord

Scratch, in Reynolds's first comedy, on the night that the theatre opened. It will give some notion of theatrical life and theatrical management, to show the standing of this man in his own country among actors before his emigration. Bernard, whom we shall have occasion to mention hereafter, gives, in his reminiscences, this anecdote and character of Prigmore. He says: He was a man of some vanity and little merit, whose opinion of himself was in inverse proportion to that of the public. One of the peculiarities of this person was to suppose (though he was neither handsome nor insinuating), that every woman whom he saw, through a mysterious fatality, fell in love with him. There was a very benevolent widow living in Plymouth, in respectable circumstances, who frequently came to the theatre, and was kind enough to inquire into the private situation of various members of the company. Among others, she asked about Prigmore, and was told that he had but a small salary, and made a very poor appearance. Hearing this, she remembered that she had a pair of her late husband's indispensables in the house, which she resolved to offer to him. A servant, who was accordingly despatched to the object of her charity, meeting one of the actors, partly disclosed his business. The actor went in search of Prigmore, and finding him, exclaimed, "Prigmore, my boy, here's your fortune made at last; here's a rich widow has fallen in love with

you, and wants to see you." Prigmore, not suspecting his roguery, was led to the servant in a state of bewildered rapture, and by the latter was informed, that the widow would be glad to see him any morning it was convenient. He appointed the following, and went home to his lodgings to indulge in a day-dream of golden independence. His friend (theatrical friend) in the mean time whispered the truth through the green-room, where there were two or three wicked enough to join in the conspiracy by walking to Prigmore's house to tender their congratulations: Prigmore, as may be supposed, passed a sleepless night, and spent an extra hour at his toilette next morning in adorning himself with a clean shirt and neckcloth. He then sallied forth, and, on reaching the widow's, was shown into her parlour, where, casting his eyes around on the substantial sufficiency of the furniture, he began to felicitate himself on the aspect of his future home.

The lady at length appeared; she was upon the verge of forty, a very fashionable age at that time, which, resting upon the shoulders of a very comely-looking woman, seemed to be in character with her comfortable dwelling. Prigmore's satisfaction and her benevolence operated equally in producing some confusion: at length a conversation commenced. She acquainted him that she had heard his situation was not so agreeable as he could wish—that his income was a confined one; she was,

therefore, desirous to do him all the service that lay in her power. Prigmore, considering this as an express declaration of her affection, was about to throw himself at her feet, when she suddenly summoned her servant, and exclaimed, "Rachel, bring the breeches!"

These words astounded him. The widow, on receiving the habiliments, folded them carefully, and remarking that they were 'as good as new,' begged his acceptance of them.

"And was it for this you wanted me, madam?" "Yes, sir." He put on his hat and walked to the door with indignation. The good woman, as much astonished as himself, followed him with "Won't you take the breeches, sir?" He replied, pausing at the door to make some bitter retort, "Wear them yourself?"

Such a man would not be worthy of the space he here occupies, except as his character and insignificance at home comport finely with his assumed importance after he had crossed the Atlantic. No uncommon thing.

West, known as the leather breeches beau (dandy was then unknown), was imported as the singer and "walking gentleman" of the company.

Robins was to be scene-painter, occasionally to sing a song, and join in the choruses.

West, junior, was literally nothing, and Miss Brett (afterwards Mrs. King) was his equal; but, as Mrs. Hodgkinson's sister, she was thrust before

the public by Hodgkinson's influence. She afterwards married King, and, he dying in consequence of excessive dissipation, she, happier than her more talented sisters, married a German doctor on Long Island, and made a notable housewife.

Those who now see actors moving in society like other men, at least in appearance, dressed as others dress, having the same fashions, manners, and behaviour, as their fellow-citizens, and not to be distinguished from them by the outside, can hardly conceive the difference which then existed between these recruits to the American company and the townsfolk in all these particulars. Long after others wore their hair short and of nature's colour, Hodgkinson had powdered curls at each side, and long braided hair twisted into a club or knot behind; instead of pantaloons and boots, breeches and stockings and shoes. This costume, with his hat on one side, and an air and manner then known by the appellation of theatrical, marked him among thousands. King displayed his fine person in another, but equally marked, manner. West usually appeared in boots and leather breeches, always new, and three gold-laced button-holes on each side of the high upright collar of a scarlet coat; while Robins, a very tall and large-framed young man, in addition to the gold-laced collar, wore three gold hatbands.

West soon involved himself in debt, and being arrested by the breeches-maker for six pair of

leather breeches, sent to Mr. Gaine, who still printed the play-bills, though no longer at the Bible and Crown, but only at the Bible, to request bail, as the prisoner's name was in the bill for that night. The old gentleman took off his spectacles and exclaimed, "Six pair of leather breeches! Why I never had one pair in my life! Six pair! Why how many *legs* has the fellow got?"

CHAPTER IX.

The Miser's Wedding—The Yellow Fever—Theatrical Dissensions—Arbitration—Mrs. Hatton, a sister of the Kembles—Mrs. Melmoth—Celebration of the Twenty-fifth of November, 1793—Mrs. Long—Sir Richard Crosby—Tammany—Ciceri—Mrs. Pownall—Mrs. Wilson—Mr. and Mrs. Henry's last appearance—He sells out to Hodgkinson and dies—Mrs. Henry's death—Tragedy of Lord Leicester—Literary Clubs.

ON the 27th of March, 1793, *The Fashionable Lover* and *No Song No Supper* were performed in the New-York Theatre, for the benefit of the widows and orphans of a number of persons who were lost in a violent storm.

During the benefits, and in the hottest weather, though early in June, a comedy called *The Miser's Wedding*, written by the author of *The Father of an Only Child*, was played without study or rehearsal, and in opposition to Henry, by the influence of Hodgkinson, who brought it out for the benefit of his wife's sister, Miss Brett. The character intended for Henry was refused by him, very properly under the circumstances, and accepted in opposition by Hallam. The piece was murdered—it deserved death—and never heard of more.

Hallam and Henry, after closing their theatre in John Street, on the 14th of June, led their company, flushed with success, to Philadelphia, to

reap a second harvest in that city, before the arrival of Wignell and his troop. But this campaign with the new forces was soon ended, and the generals retreated before that enemy which, as we have said; met Wignell at his return — yellow fever.

The theatre in John Street was again opened on November 11th, 1793, the proceeds of the evening being for the benefit of the sufferers from the pestilence in Philadelphia.

Discord was now raging among the leaders of the mimic world. Henry had found himself opposed and thwarted by Hodgkinson from the first, and as the latter gained popularity, the former found his situation becoming worse. Hallam, upon his old Machiavelian policy of divide and govern, blew the coals, and sided with Hodgkinson against Henry. The first ostensible cause of quarrel was Henry not fulfilling engagements made with Hodgkinson and wife, respecting *parts*, *benefits*, &c., and in addition, a charge of neglect and inhumanity when Hodgkinson was sick, after flying from the yellow fever of Philadelphia. Inhumanity was a favourite word with Hodgkinson. The affair was submitted to arbitrators, who met Hallam, and Henry, and Hodgkinson. Hallam sided with Hodgkinson. Henry submitted without making defence, except by a general denial of the positive assertions of his opponent; but he appeared literally overwhelmed by the audacious and unqualified assertions of the accuser, and by

the evident treachery of his partner. The parties supped together, and the arbitrators declared in writing, that the charge of inhumanity was unfounded, but as by agreement Hodgkinson was to have two benefits in Philadelphia, which the calamity of the city had prevented, Hallam and Henry should compensate him by paying the average profits of two nights of the present season to him, the expenses per night being estimated at two hundred dollars. The arbitrators recommended that such harmony might thereafter exist between the parties, as might "have a tendency to make a profession *in itself* most respectable, respectable in the eyes of mankind."

About this time one of the Kemble family arrived in New-York, a sister of Mrs. Siddons, John Kemble, Mrs. Whitlock, Charles Kemble, Stephen Kemble, and the other children of that highly talented family. This person was called Mrs. Hatton, and had a husband with her, a vulgar man. She introduced herself to the American world by writing a play called *Tammany*, which she presented to the Tammany Society, who patronised it, and recommended it to the theatre through Hodgkinson, whose favour the authoress had secured. The managers would not have dared to reject any thing from the sons of St. Tammany, and gladly received this production of the sister of Mrs. Siddons, seasoned high with spices hot from Paris, and swelling with rhodomontade, for the sonorous voice of Hodgkinson, who was to

represent the Indian saint. He did afterward represent him, as we shall see, and very much resembled the sons of the saint, who received the Cherokee, Choctaw, and other chiefs, when they marched from the East River, where they landed, up Wall Street to the old Federal Hall, to be presented to the President and Congress of the United States. How these sons of the forest must have despised the sorry imitators of barbarism, who followed in their train, with painted cheeks, rings in their noses, and bladders smeared with red ochre drawn over their powdered locks. Hodgkinson's Tammany dress was not so barbarous, for the actor took care not to excite disgust or laughter.

Another person, of more consequence in the theatrical world, appeared at New York at this time, and finding a cold reception from the managers, threw herself into the train and under the protection of Hodgkinson. This was Mrs. Melmoth. Henry considered his wife as the only representative of Melpomene needed in the New-York theatre, and received Mrs. Melmoth coldly. Mrs. Hodgkinson did not yet play tragedy, and Hodgkinson wished to *patronise* any one in opposition to Henry. Hallam looked on. The public were told of Mrs. Melmoth's merits, and it was easy to create a call for her. This was irresistible; she appeared, and Mrs. Henry as a tragedian disappeared.

Mrs. Melmoth had been carried off from a boarding-school, when young, by Pratt, known as an author under the name of Courtney Melmoth. They both went on the stage, and played in several companies in England and Ireland. They at length separated, and she continued to bear his assumed name. In 1782 she was a member of the Cork company, said to be at the time the best out of London. Miss Younge, afterwards Mrs. Pope, one of the best actresses of the English stage in either tragedy or comedy, and Miss Phillips, afterwards Mrs. Crouch, one of the best singers, and at that time, perhaps, the most beautiful girl in England or Ireland, made part of the company. Mrs. Melmoth must have been a remarkably handsome woman at the above-mentioned period. Bernard says, in his amusing reminiscences, that she "went out to America, where she purchased a plantation." Mrs. Melmoth prudently saved enough to purchase a small house on Long Island, between Brooklyn and Fort Swift, with land enough to keep some cows, whose milk contributed to supply the New-York market. This *trade*, and a few scholars, as boarders at the seminary she for some time kept at the same place, occupied her latter years profitably. She was Irish by birth, a Roman Catholic by religion, and died in the bosom of the mother church.

On the 20th of November, 1793, Mrs. Melmoth appeared for the first time on the American stage. The character she had chosen was Euphrasia, in

Murphy's tragedy of *The Grecian Daughter*. She was the best tragic actress the inhabitants of New-York, then living, had ever seen; unless it were those who had travelled, and they were at that time few. Mrs. Melmoth had played in Dublin and in Edinburgh with distinguished success. She had played in London without being distinguished. She was now past her prime, her face still handsome, her figure commanding, but not a little too large. Her dimensions were far beyond the sphere of *embonpoint*; and when Euphrasia invites Dionysius to strike her instead of her emaciated father, crying "Strike here, here's blood enough!" an involuntary laugh from the audience had nearly destroyed not only all illusion but the hopes of the actress. Her merit, however, carried her through with great applause, and she long remained a favourite. By degrees, she relinquished the youthful heroines, and in the matrons she was unexceptionable, unless that she had rather too much of the Mrs. Overdone, and, from a natural deficiency of the organs of speech, could not give utterance to that letter which her countrymen generally sound double, the letter *r*. She often played the Grecian Daughter at this period, but never repeated "Here's blood enough!"

Ten years had now passed since we had witnessed the embarkation of the no longer hostile British troops, and the slow and dispirited retreat of the fleets of England, reluctantly turning their prows from the beautiful harbour they had entered in triumph. It was the tenth twenty-fifth of Novem-

ber on which the inhabitants of New-York had celebrated the day of the departure of their invaders and the return of their exiles. The day was devoted, as usual, to rejoicing. The guns from the batteries were echoed by the ships of war of the French republic visiting the harbour; and Citizen Genet, the first ambassador from republican France, waiting on the governor, the same who had guided the state through the scenes of war, delivered an address, in which we remember this passage: "The same all-powerful arm which delivered your country from tyranny is now manifesting itself as the protector of the French people." That same evening, *The Grecian Daughter* was repeated. We had joined in the enthusiasm of the day, we had witnessed the scene at the governor's house in Pearl Street, we now witnessed the scenes at the theatre in John Street, the most impressive of which were *before* the curtain.

One of the side boxes was filled by French officers from the ships of war in the harbour. The opposite box was filled with American officers. All were in their uniforms, as dressed for the rejoicing day. French officers and soldier-sailors (we find the expression in a note made at the time), and many of the New-York militia, artillery, infantry, and dragoons, mingled with the crowd in the pit. The house was early filled. As soon as the musicians appeared in the orchestra, there was a general call for "*Ca ira*." The band struck up. The French in the pit joined first, and then the

whole audience. Next followed the Marseillois Hymn. The audience stood up. The French took off their hats and sung in a full and solemn chorus. The Americans applauded by gestures and clapping of hands. We can yet recall the figure and voice of one Frenchman, who, standing on a bench in the pit, sung this solemn patriotic song with a clear, loud voice, while his fine manly frame seemed to swell with the enthusiasm of the moment. The hymn ended, shouts of *Vivent les François Vivent ! les Americains !* were reiterated until the curtain drew up, and all was silent.

When the Grecian Daughter saves her father, and strikes the tyrant to the earth, the applause usually bestowed on this catastrophe was drowned by the enthusiastic shouts of the excited spectators. Before or since we have never witnessed or felt such enthusiasm. Surely the theatre is a powerful engine—for evil or for good.

In a preceding chapter of this work will be found the name of Miss Cheer, as a principal actress in the American company before the revolution. She now made her appearance as Mrs. Long, in *The Jealous Wife* of the elder Colman. Time had deprived the lady of all that can attract the spectator's attention to the moving pictures of the stage, and, unless that attraction exists, the imagination cannot be enlisted in the service of the actor or author. Mrs. Long was received in silence by the audience, and never heard of more. Miss

Cheer made her first appearance on the first opening of the theatre in John Street, in 1767.

On the 28th of December, Sir Richard Crosby made his appearance in the character of Barbarossa. He was announced as Mr. Richards, but after some time resumed his name of Crosby, dropping the distinguishing mark of his rank. He was by birth and education a gentleman, and *spoke* his parts with propriety; but his face was of that species called pudding, and his person literally gigantic, without any of those swelling contours which render the Hercules Farnese so admirable. The contours of Crosby were all misplaced, and might remind a spectator of Foote's description of a nobleman of his day — "he looks like a greyhound that has the dropsy."

Crosby was some inches in height over six feet, and like many men who are conscious of being too tall, he sunk instead of elevating his head, and the stride of the tyrant was reduced to a gait between a trot and a pace. That with all this against him he should remain on the stage and be tolerated is one of the proofs of the triumphs of mind over matter. He was not likely to rival either of the managers, or the managers' manager, and he was supported behind the curtain and in the journals of the day.

This gentleman was an Irishman; he dissipated a fortune among the claret-drinkers of the land of hospitality, had built a balloon, ascended in it,

and, like the ambitious high-flying Greek, had fallen into the sea. Sir Richard Crosby had been picked up by some fishing-boats in the Irish channel, and preserved, to fall, alien to his caste, a poor actor on the stage of the old American Company.

At about this date (December, 1793), the author of the comedy of *The Father of an only Child* finished a tragedy, which was read aloud by Hodgkinson to his companions, of whom at that time he had many from among our literary citizens. The tragedy was applauded, and destined for the reader's benefit. Hodgkinson was now at the height of his popularity. His salaries and his benefits for himself and wife gave him more money than he knew what to do with, and he, by advice of some of his friends, bought land in the interior — not long held. Popularity is intoxicating. The favourite actor was late in making his appearance one evening, and some one or two of the audience hissed. He demanded the cause with an air of authority. A writer in *The Daily Advertiser* of December 25th, 1793, in a letter to Hallam and Henry, says, "in a manner and in language which would have been highly resented in the country whence he came," Hodgkinson told a long story to the audience of the insolence of some drunkard in the street towards Mrs. Hodgkinson, and his beating the ruffian. All this the writer says was unnecessary: "we wanted not recounted the words and actions of the ruffian towards Mrs. H., nor a

particular description of the lady's shrieks, &c. The path of an actor," continued he, "is extremely plain; let him study his author, and endeavour to attain the summit of his professional excellence, with a decorous respect to the taste and judgment of the public." The writer described the audience of New-York as forbearing, and "never much disposed to look severely into the private actions or characters of performers."

The writer above quoted proposed Hallam (without naming him) as a model for imitation. Hallam had now begun to feel the influence of Hodgkinson, cherished by him against Henry, as rather detrimental to himself.

On the 28th, a friend of Hodgkinson's published a vindication of his conduct, and an appeal to the public, in which we will notice these words: "In private life his conduct has procured him a large and respectable circle of friends; his splendid talents, united with the politeness of his manners, renders him a welcome visiter in the first families of the city." His "refinement of mind" is likewise stated. Such are the records of the day. Politeness or refinement he had none. But at this time he had a large and respectable circle of friends, or rather admirers, attracted by his popularity on the stage and his convivial dinners and suppers. His visits were soon found unsuited to the families of citizens, and by degrees even the attraction of song and wine ceased to draw the respectable to his habitation.

On the 3d of March, the long-forthcoming opera of *Tammany*, from the pen of Mrs. Hatton, appeared. The Daily Advertiser called upon republicans to support this effort of a female, filled with "simple and virtuous sentiments." It is needless to say that the opera was "received with unbounded applause." The Daily Advertiser has a communication that places this drama among the highest efforts of genius. It was literally a tissue of bombast. The following, extracted from the Daily Advertiser of the 7th of March, 1794, shows that all the visiters of the theatre were not blinded by the puffs of the time. "I am among the many who were diverted with the piece in your paper of yesterday, signed a citizen, particularly where it supposes that *surprise* at the merits of the opera lately exhibited *astonished* our literati into silence. Much credit is due to Messrs. Hallam and Henry for the pains they have taken in decorations, scenery, &c. ; and I doubt not, 'a citizen' will, whenever *Tammany* is performed, hear the warm though juvenile exclamation, 'O what a beautiful sight!'" A more severe and well-written communication takes notice of the *ruse* made use of to collect an audience for the support of the piece, by circulating a report that a party had been made up to hiss it ; and goes on to describe the audience assembled as made up of "the poorer class of mechanics and clerks," and of bankrupts who ought to "be content with the mischief they had already

done, and who might be much better employed than in disturbing a theatre."

The disturbance alluded to was an attack upon James Hewitt, the leader in the orchestra, for not being ready with a popular air when called upon.

Heretofore the scenic decorations of the American theatre had been lamentably poor. Henry had not brought out with his recruits any artist to paint his scenes. Those of the old stock were originally of the lowest grade, and had become black with age. At this time, Charles Ciceri painted the scenes for *Tammany*. They were gaudy and unnatural, but had a brilliancy of colouring, reds and yellows being abundant. Ciceri afterwards made himself a better painter, and proved himself an excellent machinist. He was a man of exemplary habits, active mind, quick discernment, fertile in resources, and firm in purpose. His temper was quick, and his imperfect knowledge of our language occasioned misunderstandings and jealousies in his career as a scene-painter, in times we have not yet reached. His story, like that of many whose stories are never told, was a romance of real life. Born in Milan, he lost his father when he was seven years of age, and was sent to an uncle in Paris. The uncle was strict, and made him improve the opportunity of acquiring the rudiments of science. He was likewise taught a little landscape drawing. The boy, however, was headstrong, and the uncle probably se-

vere. Ciceri several times eloped. On one occasion he ran away and took the road to Flanders. After many adventures, the boy found his life abroad was worse than at home, and begged his way back to Paris almost in a starving condition. As he approached manhood, he became ungovernable, again left his uncle, and enlisted in a troop of horse. After serving three months, his friends purchased his discharge. At length, determined to get out of the reach of family control, he, when about sixteen or seventeen years of age, again eloped, enlisted in a regiment destined for St. Domingo, and, as a soldier, passed some years at Cape François. Here he formed the determination of acquiring property for himself, and he obtained permission to work at such employment as could be obtained in the town. It was the usage for the soldiers to purchase permission to pursue civil avocations by paying a portion of their earnings to the officer. The manager of the theatre wanted a scene-painter, and Ciceri made himself sufficiently master of the mode of managing colours in *size*, and with his little knowledge of landscape, and greater proficiency in mathematics, he became invaluable. At the end of six months from commencing foot-soldier, he was in possession of money enough to procure his discharge, and freight a vessel for the United States, determined to make his fortune. In five years he had accumulated a little fortune. St. Domingo became unsafe, and he determined to revisit Europe. He went to Paris,

and was employed as assistant scene-painter. He visited Bordeaux, and found employment in the splendid theatre of that place. The reign of terror drove him to England, and he was engaged at the opera house in London. With increased property he embarked as a merchant for St. Domingo, taking Jamaica in his way from England, but, finding it unsafe to visit his former place of residence at *the Cape*, he embarked with all his property for Philadelphia. Shipwrecked on the Bahamas, he lost all but life, and, after remaining seventeen days on a desert island, he was carried to Providence by a fisherman. At Providence, he, being almost starving, was asked what he could do. He answered "paint." He was offered employment as a miniature painter, and as he had said he was a painter and an Italian, no excuse would be taken. The scene-painter procured a piece of ivory, and was paid for a portrait in miniature, though he never could draw a face that might not pass as well for an owl as a man. He made friends, found his way to Philadelphia, commenced scene-painter again, in the new theatre then building in that city, under Milbourne, the company not having yet arrived. Hallam and Henry engaged him for the old playhouse in Southwark, and, when the yellow fever of 1793 broke out, he came in their service to New-York. The first knowledge the writer had of him was as the painter of the scenery of his play of *Fontainville Abbey*. His architectural scenery was always

good. He was long a most valuable auxiliary to the *corps dramatique*, and a faithful friend to the writer, in whose service he acquired sufficient property to send a stock of merchandise, with a partner, to St. Domingo, where Ciceri lost the goods, and the partner his head. He persevered, and, when his manager failed, commenced trader in French merchandise between New-York and Paris, finally retiring with a competence to his native country, whence he sent his friendly remembrances to one who had not provided so well for old age as he had done.

The visit of Henry for recruits, and of Wignell to organize and fill a regiment, seems to have conveyed the intelligence to the players of England that a continent existed over sea, called America, where some of the people were white, spoke English, and went to see plays. We have mentioned the visit of Mrs. Hatton, who kindly came to instruct us in the history of the country, the value of liberty, and the duties of the patriot, and that of Mrs. Melmoth, who, whatever were her motives, added to the rational pleasures of society by her skill as an actress; and about this time, an actress long celebrated in London in comedy and opera, as Mrs. Wrighten, made her appearance in New-York as Mrs. Pownall.

This actress was a formidable rival to Mrs. Hodgkinson. But the latter had youth on her side. The skill of the veteran will not always compensate for the charms which belong alone to

the freshness of youth. Mrs. Pownall had not lost her powers of song or of acting, which were both very great. Had she been permitted by Hodgkinson to play Margaretta, in *No Song No Supper*, Mrs. Hodgkinson would not have played the part again. What is called chance was propitious to Mrs. Hodgkinson, for, shortly after Mrs. Pownall made her debut, she broke her leg, and was for a long time incapable of exerting her talents. At length she appeared on crutches in a musical piece put together for the occasion, the plot, of which there was none, furnished by Mrs. Hatton, and the dialogue (introducing an apology) and the songs, by Mrs. Pownall.

The farce of *The Irish Widow* was got up on the 12th of March, 1794, to introduce an actress of the name of Wilson in the Widow Brady.

As marking the state of the public mind at this time, we notice a circumstance, otherwise insignificant: Hodgkinson, when he came on the stage for Captain Flash, in *Miss in her Teens*, dressed, as the part always is, in an English uniform, was hissed and called upon by the French party, who could not look at an English officer's coat without being in a rage, to "take it off." He came forward, and, to the satisfaction of the French partisans, said he represented a coward and a bully. Unfortunately, this was running on Charybdis to avoid Scylla, and the English partisans threatened vengeance on the actor. Always ready to speak or to write, Hodgkinson came out in *The Daily*

Advertiser, and, to satisfy all parties, professed to give the exact words of his "address" made on compulsion, as follows:—"Sir, the character I am going to portray is a bully and a coward, and however you may choose to quarrel with a red-coat, you would probably be a great deal more offended had I improperly disgraced the uniform of this or any other country, by wearing it on the back of a poltroon." Here it is to be observed, he admits that to wear the uniform of any country on the back of such a character was to disgrace it, and *he had worn* an English uniform. He goes on to say, that he was placed before the audience to represent an English officer, and should have deserved reprobation if he had worn an American or French uniform. This statement, under the signature of Verax, only made matters worse with the actor's countrymen, and other adherents of Old England; and on the 13th of March, 1794, the following appeared in print:

The situation I was placed in on Saturday evening last, and the explanation I was compelled to enter into, having given an opportunity to some evil-minded person to grossly mistake my words, I beg, through the medium of your paper, to lay before that part of the public who have heard the fabrication, the true meaning of what I said—"However angry you may be at the sight of a red-coat, you would probably be more displeased, had I appeared in the uniform of this or any other country, usually worn on the stage, for a character that is a disgrace to his cloth, by being a bully and a poltroon."—This was my meaning, and so plain, that I thought to misrepresent it was impossible; for I trust it will need no great argument to convince, that if I, who have constantly worn a British uniform for a British officer, had upon this occasion altered it, I might have expected that just resentment which pointed insult deserves. However, upon this, as every other occasion, I trust to the candour of my

fellow-citizens at large, and leave the being, capable of an endeavour at injury, to the disappointment and malice of his own heart.— I am, gentlemen, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN HODGKINSON.

In the beginning of April, Henry, who had gained great credit in the character of Beverley, in *The Gamester*, made an effort to revive his popularity, and the play was performed, he and his wife playing the hero and heroine. But this was considered as injurious to the young tragedian, who would play all, and wished that Mrs. Melmoth should be the only tragic actress. The house was thin, and the public were told in *The Daily Advertiser*, that it was owing to the pre-occupation of parts by incompetent persons, when others more capable were ready to fill them.— This was Henry's last effort at resistance to the fate he had invited. He made overtures to Hodgkinson for a sale of his share in the theatrical partnership, which were eagerly met; and we find the next theatrical campaign opened under the firm of Hallam and Hodgkinson.

In a letter from John Hodgkinson to Lewis Hallam, dated Philadelphia, October 12th, 1803, (when Hodgkinson was endeavouring to obtain a commission of bankruptcy by the aid of Richard Morris of New-York, and Richard Potter of Philadelphia, and Hallam had made a claim of debt), a threat of exposing Hallam occurs, which throws light upon this transaction, and on the characters of both Hodgkinson and Hallam. It is in these words:

I wish to hold you again forward to the world, and without being *compelled* to show the world too much, or adverting to any cause that may have tended to produce a share of our present misery. Recollect, and *weigh this calmly*, that if I am obliged to give any further statement of our affairs, I *must* BEGIN them, and that beginning *must* run thus. In the year 1794, John Henry, weary of the trouble he met with from various sources in the management of the property at that time known and generally styled the old American Company, offered by his friend Hugh Smith, to sell to John Hodgkinson all his share of the said property, in all American theatres; and John Hodgkinson, wishing to purchase, *advised* with Lewis Hallam, who seemed anxious that said Hodgkinson *should* become a purchaser, but at the same time wished that *himself* might be a purchaser from Henry, and that Hodgkinson should *repurchase* from Hallam. This was done, and Hodgkinson purchased from Hallam *such part as he conceived Hallam had purchased from Henry*, giving Hallam exactly the counterpart of the deeds Hallam had given Henry for the payment. It has since appeared, that Lewis Hallam, so far from selling John Hodgkinson the same proportion, only held at the period he purchased *two* shares out of *six*, or one-third of the property, and that John Henry sold Lewis Hallam three shares for 10,000 dollars—and this additional one share not only added to himself, but also saddled Hodgkinson with half of an annuity to Stephen Wools, which was paid by John Hodgkinson to said Wools to the hour of his death; and all this while John Hodgkinson had purchased under the idea that Hallam and Henry were equal holders and partners; nor was Hodgkinson made acquainted *till some years* after of the disadvantageous bargain he had made—though Hallam, by this contract, supposing the shares to amount to 10,000 dollars annually, would have received 5000 dollars instead of 3333 33! Mark, dear sir, that I do not find fault with that *now*, or *arraign* it, but it is a solemn truth which I don't wish to be compelled to give to the assignees. Yours sincerely,

JOHN HODGKINSON.

From the stage of life, as well as the stage of the theatre, Henry and his family were at once swept. His daughter eloped, and soon after died. While on a voyage to Rhode Island, he died on board a small coasting vessel, and was buried without ceremony under the sand of an island in the

sound. His wife, who was with him, it is supposed never recovered the shock, and died deprived of reason at Philadelphia, 25th April, 1795, after having had the dead body of her husband brought to her from its first place of unceremonious interment.

We find a memorandum that the theatre was shut on the 12th of April, 1794, on account of Passion-week, and reopened on the 21st for the benefits, which continued until the 28th of June, when the last season of the theatrical partnership of Hallam and Henry closed. During these benefits, the first American tragedy that was performed by professed players, was brought out for the benefit of Mr. Hodgkinson.

We have already mentioned that a tragedy by the author of *The Father of an Only Child* had been read to a literary company by Hodgkinson. It was first called *Leicester*. It was now played, 24th April, 1794, under the title of *The Fatal Deception, or the Progress of Guilt*. It was afterward published under the title of *Lord Leicester*.

The characters and cast stand thus :—

Henry Cecil,	Mr. Hodgkinson.
Dudley Cecil,	King.
Edred,	Richards.
Leicester,	Hallam.*
Howard,	Martin.
Elwina,	Mrs. Hodgkinson.
Matilda,	Melmoth.

* Sir Richard Crosby.

As the author had formerly written an interlude for Wignell when he was the favourite Darby, and called it *Darby's Return*, so now he gave Hodgkinson, the delight of the public in Shelty, a piece called *Shelty's Travels*. The house was overflowing—the applause was great—and the actor cleared full 500 dollars above the expenses, which were 200 dollars. The play was forgotten after a few repetitions, but one line was often repeated by the author's friends, as a description of a youth driven from his parental home,

A barefoot pilgrim on a flinty world.

Nevertheless, as a tragedy it is justly doomed to oblivion. Mrs. Hodgkinson on this occasion first played an important part in this branch of the drama, and evinced great powers. Hodgkinson, Mrs. Melmoth, and Mrs. Hodgkinson, produced great effect in their respective characters: of the remainder of the performers, some were passable, while others were attended by all the imperfection of a first exhibition, united to the unavoidable hurry of a *benefit play*. A few words on the subject of our literary men.

Of those giants in letters and politics who, from being dependent colonists of a country that despised them, raised an independent empire whose inhabitants to the latest ages will adore them, the Franklins, Jeffersons, Hopkinsons, Henrys, Adamses, Dickinsons, and their fellow-labourers, we shall not speak. They had created a vast

republic, whose institutions were so dissimilar to those of Europe, that a new tone seemed necessary for that literature which was to form the education of the rising generations. To open the highways by which Truth should approach all who desired her acquaintance required the united labour of her friends. Bands of pioneers were formed, who aided each other in removing rubbish, and hewing down prejudices, of stubborn texture from long growth, and mischievous from the veneration bestowed upon worthless old age.

The first pioneers in this patriotic path-making were, at the time we are now considering, many of them yet in existence. Others had arisen and were at work, opening the way for the Coopers, Irvings, Pauldings, Bryants, Walshs, Hallocks, Channings, and the hundreds who are the pride or the hope of the present day. The dramatic author, whose tragedy has passed under our notice, was connected with the aspirants who resided in New-York. He was intimately associated with Elihu H. Smith, Charles Brockden Brown, James Kent, Edward Miller, Samuel L. Mitchell, Samuel Miller, Wm. Johnson, Wm. Coleman, John Wells, and others who have distinguished themselves in the regions of fancy and science. Filled with youthful ardour, and pleased with the applause of the public and the encouragement of his associates, he thought only of future triumphs; and tragedies and comedies, operas and farces, occupied his mind, his time, and his pen. The young

men above named, with Richard Alsop, Mason Cogswell, and Theodore Dwight, of Connecticut, formed a club, projected many literary works, and executed some. A magazine was supported for a short time— a review was published. Some of these gentlemen had previously been associated under the name of the Philological Society. Perhaps to this association, of which Noah Webster was a member, may be attributed those labours which have given to the world the most perfect English dictionary in existence. The youthful dramatist owed much to such associates, and particularly to the brotherly bond which long subsisted between him, Elihu Hubbard Smith, and Charles Brockden Brown—only broken by death. Let us return to the theatre.

Having brought our history down to the abdication of Henry and succession of Hodgkinson, we will commence another chapter with the opening of the new house in Philadelphia. For a list of the company at the time of its arrival, see Chapter VIII.

But before we drop the curtain on the dramatic reign of Kings Hallam and Henry, we must mention one act of sovereignty which we omitted in its chronological order. During the season of 1790-1, they produced a farce, in two acts, written by one of the company, Mr. J. Robinson, which was received with universal applause by the public. It was called *The Yorker's Stratagem*. The scene is laid in the West Indies, and the principal charac-

ter, the Yorker, whose stratagem is to personate a Yankee trader for the purpose of obtaining a West Indian heiress, was performed by Mr. Harper. There is much dramatic skill evinced in this trifle, and dialogue well suited to the characters. The author played in it as a mongrel creole, a kind of tawny Mungo.

CHAPTER X.

Opening of the new Theatre in Philadelphia by Wignell and Reinagle
—Mrs. Oldmixon—Sir John Oldmixon—Mr. Moreton—Mr. Fennell—Mr. and Mrs. Francis—Mr. Green—Mr. Harwood—Mr. Darley—Mr. John Darley—Mr. Blissett—Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock—Mr. Chalmers—Mr. and Mrs. Marshall—Mr. Bates—Miss Broadhurst.

AFTER the long delay occasioned by the yellow fever, Wignell opened the splendid theatre, which had been prepared for him in 1792, on the 17th of February, 1794. He had brought from England Mr. Milbourne, an excellent scene-painter, who decorated the house and furnished the necessary scenery, as far surpassing any stage decorations heretofore seen in the country as the building surpassed former American theatres.

The plan of this building was furnished by Mr. Richards, who was Wignell's brother-in-law, and secretary to the Royal Academy. The model was burnt when the house was consumed. Mr. Richards likewise presented to the managers several very fine scenes, and the beautiful drop-curtain, which was destroyed likewise by the fire of 1820.

The part of the theatre before the curtain formed a semicircle, having two complete rows of boxes, and higher up, on a line with the gallery, side-boxes. The boxes were supported by pillars formed of bunches of reeds, tied together with red

fillets and gilt. Festoons of curtains and numerous chandeliers gave a brilliant effect to the whole. The first dramatic pieces presented to the public of Philadelphia by the new company were *The Castle of Andalusia* and *Who's the Dupe*.

The orchestra, under the direction of Reinagle, who sat at the harpsichord, was as much superior in power and talent as the other departments of the Drama.

Mr. Reinagle was the brother of the great animal painter, and father of our worthy fellow-citizen Mr. Hugh Reinagle; he was a very genteel man and skilful musician. The first piece played was an opera, and we are informed that, notwithstanding the great dramatic strength of the company of 1793, Mr. Wignell was led to rest his hopes on the operatic department. Mr. Wood says, he "has often declared to me, that, had he devoted *all* his care to the Drama, instead of music, he might have been rich instead of a bankrupt." [He opened in Annapolis, as in Philadelphia, with *The Castle of Andalusia*.] "The first year I visited Philadelphia," says Mr. Wood, "I saw the opera of *Robin Hood* greatly played and sung, to a house of forty dollars."

The same friendly correspondent has furnished us with a *cast* of *Every One has his Fault*, as performed by Wignell's company in 1794, which will give an idea of the strength of the corps to all who remember the principal performers, or who may turn back to this page after reading the notices we

shall give of them. "Lord Norland, Mr. Whitlock (his best part); Captain Irwin, Fennell; Placid, Moreton; Sir Robert Ramble, Chalmers; Solus, Morris; Hammond, Greene; Mrs. Placid, Mrs. Shaw; Miss Spinster, Mrs. Bates; Lady Elinor, Mrs. Whitlock; Miss Wooburn, Mrs. Morris; Edward (a matchless performance), Mrs. Marshall."

We proceed to give a sketch of the lives and dramatic education of some of the most prominent performers in this very efficient company. Mrs. Oldmixon was first seen by the writer in London as Miss George, filling the station of first comic singer, and the line of comic girls and chambermaids, at the Haymarket theatre. She held the same station at Drury Lane in the winter. She was so distinguished a favourite at this time, 1785-6, that her portrait was exhibited in company with John Palmer's, at Somerset House, by Russell, the best painter in *pastils* or crayons that we remember. The expression was very characteristic, full of archness, and might have passed for that of the Comic Muse. Mrs. Oldmixon retained for the many years she was on the stage great vivacity and force; in the later years of her stage history, she frequently played the old woman of comedy, and with peculiar effect.

She changed her name by marriage with Sir John Oldmixon, recorded by Bernard as the Bath beau. As Lady Oldmixon, a stage-player would appear rather incongruous, and unsanctioned by custom; the title does not appear in the play-bills,

neither was it assumed in private life. The lady was called universally Mrs. Oldmixon, except by old Philip, the doorkeeper of the stage, who was a German by birth, and had been brought hither with other slaves of the Prince of Hesse. Philip could see no propriety in putting the Mrs. before the "old." "De fools! dey are always axing for Mrs. Oldmixon! Mrs. Oldmixon! ven I tell 'em dey mean old Mrs. Mixon, and yet dey vont larn." Such was the complaint the porter made of the stupid Yankees to the lady herself; and none would enjoy the joke more.

Sir John, though not an actor or an author, is so intimately connected with the stage, that we must not omit him. Bernard, who will be entitled to a place in our narrative of stage events, and collection of theatrical characters, says he first met Sir John at Bath in 1784.

"It was during one of my morning calls that I met Sir John Oldmixon at his lordship's:" [one Lord Conyngham, who was the model of Bernard's Lord Ogilby] "and the flattering introduction I then received improved our previously distant street acquaintance into a lasting intimacy. This gentleman, from the refinement of his dress and manners, bore the peculiar appellation of the Bath beau, and upon all points of good breeding was looked up to as an oracle. This distinction in the metropolis of fashion he was not slightly proud of; it acknowledged him as the legitimate successor in the dynasty of Nash. Certainly, the mechanism

of his dress was a profound study, and his science in manœuvring a snuff-box and a cane was, for many months in my eyes, an impenetrable mystery. I have been told that Sir John was the original of Mrs. Cowley's Lord Sparkle; he certainly was of mine, accident having thrown him in my way on my first visit to Bath. Whatever success I obtained in the fops and fine gentlemen (which were the characters I played mostly in London), I am willing to acknowledge that I owe it all to the strong impressions I received from Sir John Oldmixon. But this gentleman enjoyed the additional celebrity of having founded an order of his own—the 'full curl' order, as it might have been called, grateful to the memories of the perquiers of the last generation. Our first performance of *Which is the Man* was so successful, that in the course of the ensuing week it was repeated. The next day Sir John met and stopped me in the street, saying, 'Bernard, I saw your Sparkle last night; they say you imitate me!' 'It is my object, Sir John,' I replied, 'to imitate the manners of an English nobleman!' 'Ah, ah, true; but your dress was incorrect.' 'In that respect,' said I, 'I must confess, Sir John, I did intend to imitate you.' 'Oh no, quite wrong; you had only twelve curls of a side; I never wear under sixteen!'"

Such is the picture an English writer gives of an English nobleman. Our motive for introducing this extract is to contrast the situation of this man, "the successor" of Nash, the oracle of fashion

“in the metropolis of fashion,” with that he held in society among the plebeians of the New World. The following appeared in the London papers of 1796. “Sir John Oldmixon, whose equipage was once the gaze of Bond Street, is now a gardener near Philadelphia. He drives his own cabbages to market in his own cart! His wife, formerly Miss George, sings at the theatre, and returns in the conveyance which brought vegetables for sale.”

The fact is, Sir John did, with the earnings of his wife, purchase or hire a cottage at Germantown, and drove vegetables to market in a conveyance which would allow of his wife's going to town to attend her professional duties, and return when they were over for the time. Thus a family was maintained and educated by industry and economy, and Sir John only retained of the Bath beau the snuff-box, which he certainly *tapped*, *opened*, and presented with the air of a finished gentleman, and manners which indicated his familiarity with a state of society very dissimilar to that found in America. What broke up this Germantown establishment, and separated the family is not for us to enquire into—most probably something more congenial to the Bath beau than the American gardener. In 1816, Sir John was living obscurely at Sag Harbour, Long Island.

The principal gentleman comedian in this splendid company, at the time under review, was Mr. Moreton. He was, as remembered by the writer,

the most elegant gentleman performer that our long acquaintance with the London and American theatres has made known to us. Tall, slender, straight-limbed, and perfectly at ease, his regular features, light complexion, and blue eyes, with the perfect air and manner of a finished gentleman, united to the talent, vivacity, and mind, which must combine to make a real actor, gave to the spectator a combination rarely seen on any stage.

Mr. Wood, the worthy successor to this gentleman in the Philadelphia company, has furnished us, in answer to our inquiries, among other information important to our work, with the following notice of Mr. Moreton.

“Of Mr. Moreton, my splendid predecessor, thus much I know from Mr. Wignell (*the best authority*). John Pollard, Moreton being an assumed name, was born in America, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Niagara Falls. He was in early life taken to England, and from thence sent to India, and became assistant cashier in the Calcutta Bank. His confidence was abused by a friend, whom he suffered to overdraw the bank to a large amount, on the most sacred assurances that it should be replaced in time to prevent the irregularity being known. The overdraft was repaid, but not in time to prevent the knowledge of Pollard's imprudence—the friend failed to keep his word, and Pollard lost his situation, and the confidence necessary to success—he returned to England, and there met with Wignell, who en-

gaged him as a member of his company in 1793. His first thirty or forty appearances, I have been assured by Mr. Wignell and others, were any thing but promising : but his early good breeding and close study soon made him the first of high comedians, either native or imported. I declare I think him in the easy (not spirited) comedy the best, except Lewis, I ever saw."

Mr. Wood saw Mr. Lewis after he had passed his meridian, when he played the characters which were written for him by Reynolds, Morton, and Colman ; the writer saw him in earlier life, the delight of London, in Ranger, Mercutio, the Copper Captain, Sir Charles Racket, and that range of better comedy which preceded. He was more like Moreton than any other actor we have seen, and his superior as an artist. Moreton died before he could have attained the skill his talents would have certainly achieved.

Mr. Wood says, "Moreton was in very ill health a long time. The last part he played was Lothario, in *The Fair Penitent*. (I saw him in it). He was obliged to lie long on the stage after falling ; the night being severe, he was taken into the greenroom in a very exhausted state. He never played again. He died of consumption. His case, like many we meet with in that disease, was a very flattering one. I spent an hour with him on Friday, when he talked confidently of playing soon. Calling on Monday, he was dead—passing away as in a gentle sleep—nor was his

death noticed by his attendant." He died April 2d, 1798, at Philadelphia, and the theatre was closed three days, as a tribute of respect to his memory.

Mr. James Fennell was born in London, received a good education, which was finished at the University of Cambridge. Rejecting the study of the law, he offered himself to the manager of the Edinburgh theatre in 1787, under the assumed name of Cambray, and was well received by the public in the characters of Jaffier and Othello. Othello continued long a favourite character with Fennell, and with another sooty-face (Zanga), placed him high among the heroes of tragedy. Returning to London, he offered himself to Mr. Harris, and, still under the name of Cambray, played with some success, though not enough to fix him on the boards of Covent Garden.

He returned to Edinburgh, and played with some eclat, but a dispute arising respecting parts with a favourite actor, the populace drove Mr. Fennell from the stage. A law-suit was the consequence, and after a time a return to London, where in 1789 he again had an engagement at Covent Garden, without rising in the profession.

Between this time and his engagement with Wignell for Philadelphia, he appeared in Paris as my Lord Anglais, and supported an hotel in great style, at the expense of all who trusted to his specious manners and fine appearance.

He was a remarkably handsome figure, although above the just height, being considerably over six feet ; his complexion and hair light, with a blush ready for every occasion on which a blush could be graceful. His features were not handsome, his nose being round, thick, and too fleshy, and his eyes a very light grey, with yellowish lashes and brows. His appearance in the *Moors*, *Othello* and *Zanga*, was noble ; his face appeared better and more expressive, and his towering figure superb. His *Glenalvon* was a fine piece of acting, and, generally, his villains appeared very natural. Deceit seemed to be at home in all his words and actions.

His style of living in Philadelphia was modelled on the plan he had tried in Paris, and, with the same short-sighted system of dishonest extravagance, ended in the same disgraceful poverty, without the opportunity of flight. He was the idol of the literary youth of Philadelphia, and for a time revelled in the luxury of stylish living, and applause on and off the stage. We shall often have occasion to mention this singular man, who abused the gifts of his Creator, and the cares bestowed upon his education by his father ; and, after a series of acts which, if an honourable and liberal profession could be disgraced by an unworthy member, would have disgraced it—and after all that obloquy and misery inseparable from a career of fraud—after sporting with the credulity of the

inhabitants on the seashore, from Chesapeake-bay to Massachusetts, by pretended new modes of making salt, and with that of every city of note at that time in the Union by other pretences—after passing from the palace to the prison again and again—this unhappy man appeared for the last time on the stage of the Chestnut Street theatre, where he had been idolized in 1794, and exhibited the powerless remains of what God had made man, and vice had debased to a wretched driveller. He was allowed to attempt Lear in 1815, but even his memory was gone. And the scene of his former triumphs witnessed his last public exhibition of pitiable imbecility—the fruit of selfish indulgence, deviation from truth, and final intemperance. He died shortly after, in what, according to the course of nature, would have been the season of perfect manhood.

Of Mr. and Mrs. Francis little is known previous to their coming to America. Mr. Francis had been a dancer, but for many years gout had possession of his legs and feet, a sore enemy to grace and activity. He played old men respectably. When Cooke arrived in Philadelphia, he met in Francis and his wife old companions of the provincial theatres, and hearty friends. Billy Francis and George Frederick clasped hands with the cordiality of two sailors, who had navigated the same ship, shared the same toils, storms, and pleasures, and met again in a foreign country, after a separation of years.

Mrs. Francis, always respectable in her profession, was in private life a model of cheerful benevolence. This worthy pair, having no children, adopted and shared their professional earnings with those who had no parents. Joseph Harris, Miss Hunt, late Mrs. Bray of the Boston theatre, and another orphan, may attest their parental care and beneficence, and the inhabitants of Philadelphia generally their estimable qualities. Francis died worn out by frequent attacks of the gout; Mrs. Francis lives at an advanced age, cheerful and happy, though rendered inactive by a partial paralysis. Sickness, decay, and death, is the lot of all; cheerfulness, resignation, and happiness, is the reward of those who love their God and their neighbour—the benevolent.

Mr. Greene was not much of an actor when he enlisted with Wignell, but a young, tall, good-looking man. Of his previous history we know nothing. He married a pretty girl, Miss Willems, who came out from England at the same time, and was a member of the corps. Greene became a good second actor in first parts, was the manager of several southern theatres, and had the misfortune to lose a daughter, one of the loveliest creatures as a girl that we remember, in that dreadful conflagration which destroyed the theatre of Richmond, and filled the town with mourning.

John E. Harwood was, from talents and education, one of the brightest ornaments of the Philadelphia company. A young man at the time of

forming his engagement with Wignell, he was engaging in manners, and remarkably handsome in the form and expression of his countenance. He was inclined to indulgence, and became somewhat corpulent ; but never lost the expression of humour, and the power of delighting an audience, although the exertion of that power was checked, and sometimes paralyzed, by indolence. He had been intended for the law, and probably chose the stage to avoid labour, although labour only can ensure success on the stage. Mr. Harwood married Miss Bache, a granddaughter of our great philosopher and politician Franklin, a man to whom we owe more than perhaps to any one man of the revolution, except Washington. We shall come in contact with Harwood again in this work, and, though we never think of him without regret, it is regret for one whose good qualities we admired and loved, whose faults we would willingly throw into the huge mass of nature's frailties, and cover them with the pall of oblivion. "Alas, poor Jack!"

Mr. Darley, the father of the well-known Mr. John Darley, long before the public as an actor and singer, and hereafter to be mentioned, was brought into public notice on the London stage by the uncommon powers and melody of his voice. In the winter of 1784-5, a farce called *The Positive Man* had a run at Covent Garden, its success being much owing to the pleasure received from a song by Mrs. Kennedy, in the character of a sailor. The

song was Sweet Poll of Plymouth, not yet forgotten. The next winter the manager brought forward the farce, and attempted to deprive John Bull of the song; but John was *uproarious*, and doubtless delighted with the opportunity of managing the manager; hisses and groans, and stick-thumps, with catcalls, evinced his sense of harmony, and at length came apology to conciliate the "Gentlemen and Ladies." Apology stated that Mrs. Kennedy was not in the theatre, but if Mr. Darley would be accepted, he was ready to attempt the song. Accordingly, Darley came forward, dressed as a sailor, and never was the simple melody of Sweet Poll given with more effect, or received with greater pleasure. This is among the reminiscences of the writer, who enjoyed the fun and the song.

Mr. Darley was afterwards famous among English lovers of English opera for his Farmer Blackberry, which pleased as much at least as Incledon's Valentine in the same afterpiece of *The Farmer*. Mr. Darley was a stout, perhaps we might say, a fat man, and his appearance was not suited to any great variety of character. After his return to his native country, he enjoyed public favour and esteem in private life, and died respected as the keeper of a porter-house in Oxford Street, London.

John Darley, the son of the above, came out to America when a boy with his father, and was occasionally introduced as a singer on the stage of

Philadelphia, but he left the service of the Muses for the United States' service as a lieutenant of marines ; in which branch of our naval establishment, had he remained, he would now have been nearly at the head ; but he returned to the stage in 1800, and married Miss E. Westray, forming a union of histrionic and musical ability which ensured competence, and has produced a numerous and talented domestic circle, that will make the evening of their lives as tranquil as the morning and noon has been pleasant to the eyes and ears of their fellow-citizens. Mr. and Mrs. Darley will again be met with in the pages of our theatrical record.

Blissett was unknown to the writer. He was the best of actors in a small part. He returned to England in 1821, and has played in Guernsey and Jersey. As a low comedian, he has been spoken of as possessing talent and humour of a high grade. "He was very great in Jerry Sneak and Doctor Last," says Mr. Wood, "and incomparably the best Frenchman I ever saw ; his Doctor Caius, Doctor Dablancour, and Monsieur le Medecin, were considered *perfect* ; his Sheepface, in *The Village Lawyer*, was excellent. He seldom succeeded in a very long part. We have heard that, having inherited property from his father, Mr. Blissett now resides in ease and retirement on the Continent of Europe.

Mr. Whitlock was, at the time of coming to America, past the meridian of life, and in appearance and manner "every inch" a gentleman.

He filled the parts of fathers, serious or tragic, and played some comic characters, but not with equal success. He had been long on the English provincial stage, and was a partner in management with the afterwards famous Munden. Munden's London celebrity, and Whitlock's emigration to America, may be traced to Hodgkinson, who had been received into the company and the family of Munden, as has been mentioned. Whitlock was afterwards under Hodgkinson's management in this country; but returned home with his talented wife, and passed the evening of his life in quiet competency, more owing to the energy of her character than his own.

Mrs. Whitlock was one of the many children of Roger Kemble, and of course sister to Mrs. Siddons, John Kemble, Stephen Kemble, Charles Kemble, and all the rest of this celebrated and fortunate family; fortunate that in so numerous a circle there should be but one, the before-mentioned author of *Tammany*, who could call up a blush or a sigh at the mention of name or act: and that one was not on the stage.

Mrs. Whitlock had been the support and ornament of the company of Whitlock and Munden, and had played at Bath and in London, before the engagement which brought her to Philadelphia in 1793. She was what may truly be called a fine-looking woman, with some of the Siddons and Kemble physiognomy, but fairer of complexion, and not so towering in stature. Her eye and

voice were powerful, and reminded the spectator and hearer of her sister, sometimes raising expectations, which were not fully realized, of seeing a second Siddons. She was of great value in her profession, and out of it an honour to her family. She still lives, respected and beloved, enjoying the fruits of her exertions in that branch of the fine arts, which owes so much to the family of her father.

Of Mr. Warrell we know nothing but that he was a respectable man. Mrs. Warrell was a good singer, and added strength to this very fine company in its operatic department. Master Warrell, the son of the above, was one of the *corps de ballet*.

Chalmers was brought out by Wignell, as his first gentleman comedian, and occasional tragedian. He was soon superseded by Moreton in the first, and immediately by Fennell in the second, branch of acting. He had talents and powers as an actor in comedy, but no application; and consummate vanity, with utter carelessness of any thing but self-gratification, ruined him. He sank into insignificance, returned to England about the year 1805-6, and died suddenly.

Mr. Marshall was engaged to fill the line of fops and Frenchmen, and that of first singer. His previous life is unknown to us, except that he played at Covent-Garden, and was the very successful successor of Wewitzer, in Bagatelle. He returned to England in 1801. "Some few years

ago," says Mr. Wood, "I learned that he was totally blind, and living comfortably on the theatrical fund, a noble institution." The same gentleman remarks that every attempt to establish such a fund had failed in this country, as is much to be regretted. Mr. Marshall made his debut in America at the theatre of Annapolis, where Wignell carried his splendid troop to employ them, while Philadelphia was shut against them by pestilence. The house, then occupied by the company, is now, and has been for years, a public school. There is now another theatre in Annapolis.

Mrs. Marshall was a pretty little woman, and a most charming actress in the Pickles and romps of the drama. Her Edward, in *Every One has his Fault*, is spoken of to this day as perfection. She was afterwards, when less young, less beautiful, and less admired, Mrs. Wilmot.

Bates was Wignell's principal low comedian, after himself, without one-twentieth part of Harwood's talent, but the latter was then young, and new to the stage, and "Billy Bates" was an old stager. He was a broad, short, strong-built man, with some comedy in his face, but it was all low, conceited, and cunning. Bates had been, like the celebrated Rich, both a Harlequin and a manager, and was found as an underling at Drury Lane by Wignell. Bernard, in his amusing book, thus mentions him as an acting manager. "Bates, as most acting managers are, was the commander of his company on the stage and in the closet. He

played all the best parts, and thus laid claim to the character of the superior actor." As an actor he is thus mentioned, when under another management very dissimilar to his own. His manager was present in a first-rate character at rehearsal, when Bates entered to deliver a message, which he did with all the flourish of a hero, who had been preceded by the sound of a trumpet. "Mr. Bates," says the principal, "you surely don't intend to deliver that message in that manner to-night?" "Yes, sir, but I do." "You are too loud, sir." "Loud, sir! not at all, sir; I'm only energetic. I've got a benefit to make as well as you, sir." It used to be said in Philadelphia, that Bates had a standing, falling, practical joke, more profitable to the dealers in glass than to those with whom he dined. He would contrive to place a wine-glass, slyly, near the edge of the table, and then as by accident brush it off, exclaiming, "There, I have turned a wine-glass into a tumbler!"

Miss Broadhurst, a genteel and amiable young lady, was engaged in this great company as a second singer in serious opera, Mrs. Oldmixon being the first, and dividing the comic with Mrs. Marshall. Miss Broadhurst had science, but not personal beauty, or skill as an actress, to recommend her. She was attended by her mother in this visit to the New World, and left Wignell's company after the first season.

CHAPTER XI.

Boston — Law against Stage-plays by the General Court of Massachusetts, 1750 — Hallam and Henry petition for leave to open a theatre, and are refused — Perez Morton's Petition, 1791 — Instructions given by the town of Boston to their Representatives — Committee appointed, who report against a Theatre — Mr. and Mrs. Morris and Harper go to Boston — A theatre built in Broad Alley — Charles Powell — Plays performed as Moral Lectures — Players arrested on the Stage — Governor Hancock's Speech — Law against Theatres repealed — Federal Street Theatre built and opened — Prologue by Mr. T. Paine — Opposition Prologue.

MASSACHUSETTS, both as a colony of Great Britain and as an independent state, had been forbidden ground to all Thespians. As early as the year 1750, before any of that dangerous class of people had ventured over the Atlantic, the General Court of Massachusetts, that is, in the language of other parts of our country, the House of Assembly or Representatives, passed an act to prevent stage-plays and other theatrical entertainments. The historian of Massachusetts says, that the cause of "this moral regulation" was, that two young Englishmen, assisted by some townsmen, tried to represent Otway's tragedy of *The Orphan*, and the inhabitants were so eager to see the entertainment, that some disturbances took place at the door of the coffee-house where they were amusing themselves. This so alarmed the lieutenant-go-

vernor, council, and house of representatives, that, "For preventing and avoiding the many and great mischiefs which arise from public stage-plays, &c. which not only occasion great and unnecessary expenses, and discourage industry and frugality, but likewise tend generally to increase immorality, impiety, and a contempt of religion," they enacted as follows: "that from and after the publication of this act, no person or persons whatsoever may, for his or their gain, or for any price or valuable consideration, let, or suffer to be used or improved, any house, room, or place whatsoever, for acting or carrying on any stage-plays, interludes, or other theatrical entertainments, on pain of forfeiting and paying for each and every day, or time, such house, room, or place, shall be let, used, or improved, contrary to this act, twenty pounds. And if, at any time or times whatsoever, from and after the publication of this act, any person or persons shall be present as an actor in or spectator of any stage-play, &c. in any house, &c. where a greater number of persons than twenty shall be assembled together, every such person shall forfeit for each time five pounds. One-half to his majesty, and one-half to the informer."

Such were the feelings and opinions of the representatives of the people of Massachusetts in 1750; "but," says the author of *Dramatic Reminiscences* in the *New England Magazine*, "as the Puritanic sentiments of the older inhabitants gave place to

more liberal and extended views in religion and morals, much of the prejudice against theatrical amusements subsided."

After Wignell had separated from Hallam and Henry, they, foreseeing that he would occupy the south, petitioned the legislature of Massachusetts, on the 5th of June, 1790, "for leave to open a theatre in Boston, under proper regulations." The petition was not granted.

In 1791, a petition was presented to the select men of Boston, drawn up by Perez Morton, Esq., and signed by him and thirty-eight other gentlemen of the town, setting forth "the advantages of well regulated public amusements in large towns," and stating that, "being desirous of encouraging the interests of genius and literature, by encouraging such theatrical exhibitions as are calculated to promote the cause of morality and virtue, and conduce to polish the manners and habits of society," and for other reasons assigned, they respectfully solicit the board of select men to take the opinion of the inhabitants "on the subject of admitting a theatre in the town of Boston," and of instructing their representatives "to obtain a repeal" of the prohibitory act of 1750, which law had been revived in 1784, to be in force fifteen years.

On the 26th of October, this subject was debated in town-meeting, and a committee appointed to prepare instructions to the representatives of the

town in the legislature, and on the 9th of November following, the committee presented their report to the adjourned town-meeting, which was accepted.

The instructions state, that the inhabitants of Boston consider the prohibitory law of 1750 as an infringement of their privileges; and that a "theatre, where the actions of great and virtuous men are represented, will advance the interests of private and political virtue." They, for these and similar reasons, instruct the representatives to endeavour to effect the "repeal of the law alluded to, so far, at least, as respects the town of Boston." They farther instruct, that "the law of repeal may be so constructed that no dramatic composition shall be the subject of theatrical representation," till sanctioned "by some authority appointed for the purpose;" that no "immoral expressions may ever disgrace the American stage;" but, on the contrary, all "subserve the great and beneficial purposes of public and private virtue."

In January, 1792, Mr. Tudor brought the subject before the house of representatives, and moved for a committee to "consider the expediency of bringing in a bill to repeal the prohibitory law of 1750." After opposition, a committee was appointed, and "a remonstrance against the repeal" was referred to the same committee.

The committee reported on the 20th that it was inexpedient to repeal the law. Notwithstanding the efforts of Mr. Gardiner and Dr. Jarvis against this report, it was accepted on the 25th. The

names of Samuel Adams and Benjamin Austin are enrolled as opponents to a theatre. The latter wrote "a series of essays," says the author of *Reminiscences*, "to prove that Shakspeare had no genius." The principal advocates for stage exhibitions were William Tudor and Dr. Charles Jarvis.

We see from the above instructions, given by Boston to her representatives, that the opinions of the people of the capital of Massachusetts had undergone a change. We shall soon see, that, notwithstanding present opposition to these opinions, they were triumphant, and the drama established in the cradle of the liberties of America.

The secession of Wignell from the old American Company, and his crossing the Atlantic in search of performers, caused the immediate voyage of John Henry, also for the same purpose. It has been stated that Mr. and Mrs. Morris and Stephen Wools were sharers in the *scheme* of the old company. Harper was not. Mr. and Mrs. Morris took their part with Wignell, and were, during his absence, to seek employment. Harper was not engaged with either party. Wools adhered to the property in which he was a sharer, but was left for the present unemployed.

Under these circumstances, the above-named four individuals united for the purpose of trying their fortunes in Boston, invited by the efforts for the establishment of a theatre which a portion of the inhabitants were making. Notwithstanding

the refusal of the legislature to repeal the law of 1750, a number of gentlemen formed an association for the purpose of introducing the drama. A committee was formed to carry their purpose into effect, and ground purchased on which to erect a building in Broad-alley, near Hawley-street. The committee were, according to Mr. Buckingham, "Joseph Russell, Esq., who also acted as treasurer to the association, Dr. Jarvis, Gen. Henry Jackson, Joseph Barrell, and Joseph Russell, Jun." "A theatre in every thing but the name" was erected. A pit, one row of boxes, and a gallery, could contain about five hundred persons, and it was called the "New Exhibition Room." "The boxes formed three sides of a regular square, the stage making the fourth. The scenery was tolerably well executed." But before its completion, Charles Powell arrived from England, and advertised an entertainment, which he called "The Evening Brush for rubbing off the Rust of Care," to consist of songs and farcical recitations. This was on Monday, August 13th, 1792, and on the 16th, the New Exhibition Room was opened by Harper as manager, with feats on the tight rope by Mons. Placide, songs by Mr. Wools, feats on the slack rope and tumbling by Mons. Martine, hornpipes and minuets by Mons. and Madame Placide, and the gallery of portraits by Mr. Harper, the manager. "These entertainments," says the New England Magazine, "continued, with slight variations, for several weeks."

Thus we see a theatre was put in operation in open defiance of the law of the state, and, as the good people of Boston were denied rational amusement, they accepted the efforts of the tumbler and rope-dancer, and eagerly seized on the entertainments of Sadler's Wells, when prohibited by law from listening to the lines of the wit or the poet, as recited at Old Drury or Covent Garden.

But this could not last long ; the company of performers increased in numbers : Mr. and Mrs. Morris, and Harper, were really actors ; to these were added the names of Mr. and Mrs. Solomon, Messrs. Roberts, Adams, Watts, Jones, Redfield, Tucker, Murry, Mrs. Gray, Miss Smith, and Miss Chapman—names only mentioned as being the first professional actors who performed plays in Boston. Roberts was deformed, and almost an idiot ; Watts a vulgar fellow, with a wry neck ; Miss Smith became soon after Mrs. Harper : the rest are only names. Charles Powell joined Harper.

Plays were now performed ; but, as the theatre was called an exhibition room, *Douglas* was represented as a Moral Lecture in five parts, "delivered by Messrs." so and so ; and all the songs of *The Poor Soldier* were to be "delivered by Messrs. Watts, Murry, Redfield, Solomon, Jones, Mrs. Solomon, and Miss Chapman." The play-bill for this entertainment, *Douglas* and *The Poor Soldier*, thus disguised, was dated September 26th, 1792. Wools, who was attached to Hallam and Henry's

company, had before this joined his leaders, they having opened the old theatre in Philadelphia.

Thus were the laws defied, and the people and their magistrates insulted for several weeks. The municipal authorities criminally suffered this nuisance to exist until "about the end of October or beginning of November, when," as Mr. Buckingham says, "during the representation of *The School for Scandal*, while Morris and his wife were on the stage in the characters of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, the sheriff of the county suddenly and very unexpectedly *made his first appearance on that stage*, and arrested them by virtue of a peace-warrant." Some of the audience leaped on the stage from the pit, "tore down the arms of the state, which decorated a tablet between one of the stage-boxes and the door, and trampled it under their feet. Several gentlemen immediately came forward and became bound for the appearance of the persons arrested;" and shortly after, an association was formed for erecting a permanent theatre.

"It does not appear," says Mr. Buckingham, who writes on the spot, and has every source of information at command, "that those whose duty it was to see the laws executed, pursued the offenders with much rigour."

The legislature of Massachusetts at this time sat at Concord, and Governor Hancock, in his speech, thus alludes to what he justly considered

“an open insult upon the laws and government of the Commonwealth.”

“Whether the apprehensions of the evils which might flow from theatrical exhibitions, so fully expressed in the preamble of that act” (the act of 1750, to be continued in force till 1799), “are well founded or not, may be a proper subject of legislative disquisition, on a motion for the continuance or the repeal of the law ; but the act is now a law of the commonwealth ; the principles on which it is predicated have been recognised by and derive support from several legislatures, and surely it ought to claim the respect and obedience of all persons who live, or happen to be, within the commonwealth. Yet a number of aliens or foreigners have lately entered the state, and, in the metropolis of the government, under advertisements insulting to the habits and education of the citizens, have been pleased to invite them to, and to exhibit before such as have attended, stage-plays, interludes, and theatrical entertainments, under the style and appellation of moral lectures.” He proceeds to say, “no measures have been taken to punish a most open breach of the laws, and a most contemptuous insult upon the powers of government.” He then calls upon the legislature to take measures to rectify the abuse, and punish the offenders.

The legislature in reply concur with the governor, and promise to endeavour to remedy any defect that may be found in the statute. The con-

sequence was, that, in December, a warrant, was issued for the apprehension of the offenders, and the sheriff, in obedience to his precept, took the body of Mr. Harper, and as to the rest returned *non inventus*. The justices (Barrett and Greenleaf), with a view to accommodate the numerous spectators, who waited with anxious expectation the result of this important inquiry, held their sitting at Faneuil Hall. Upon Mr. Harper's appearance before them, the attorney-general read a special order from the governor and council, directing him to prosecute and bring to condign punishment these contemnners of the law ; and then read his complaint filed with the aforesaid justices, upon which they had issued their warrant as above.

Messrs. Tudor and Otis, for the defendant, suggested the illegality of the complaint, it not being grounded upon an oath, as required by the 14th article of the declaration of rights. The objection prevailed, and Mr. Harper was released from his arrest, amid the loud applauses of a "numerous and respectable audience."

On the 5th of December, a few evenings subsequent to the preceding measures, just after the first act of the play had been performed, the sheriff executed a second warrant on Mr. Harper, and put a stop to the performance. The audience, finding themselves thus disappointed, became riotous, and it was at this time (according to this statement) that the painting of the state arms was pulled down and torn to pieces. Judge Tudor

addressed the audience, and begged the company to withdraw, which had its effect, and great order was observed in retiring from the house.

The existence of a legislative enactment, which has become obsolete, or is contrary to the sense or will of the community, is at all times the source of evil. It is broken with impunity, or, if the offender is punished, he is considered as a martyr, and praised and supported, while the laws, the only safeguard of society, are rendered of less effect in the eyes of the people, both of those they are intended to restrain, and those for whose protection they are enacted.

In 1793, the legislature of Massachusetts repealed the law against theatrical amusements, and the Federal-street theatre was opened February 4th, 1794, with a prologue written by Thomas Paine, the son of the Honourable Robert Treat Paine, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. The poet petitioned the legislature afterwards to give him a *Christian* name, as then he had none. They granted the prayer, and gave him the one of his choice, that of his father. Charles Powell (who, as we have seen, had joined Harper and others in giving moral lectures on *Jane Shore*, *Douglas*, and *The School for Scandal*) spoke the prologue, which, as the beginning of the Boston regular and lawful theatrical history, we give. A gold medal had been offered by the proprietors for the best, and the prize adjudged to this.

When first o'er Athens learning's dawning ray
 Gleam'd the dim twilight of the Attic day ;
 To charm, improve, the hours of state repose,
 The deathless father of the drama rose,
 No gorgeous pageantry adorned the show ;
 The plot was simple, and the scene was low.
 Without the wardrobe of the Graces, dress'd ;
 Without the mimic blush of art, caress'd ;
 Heroic virtue held her throne secure,
 For vice was *modest*, and ambition *poor*.

But soon the Muse, by nobler ardours fir'd,
 To loftier heights of scenic verse aspir'd.
 From useful life her comic fable rose,
 And curbless passions formed the tale of woes ;
 For daring Drama heav'n itself explored,
 And gods descending trod the Grecian board,
 Each scene expanding through the temple swelled,
 Each bosom acted what each eye beheld :
 Warm to the heart, the *chymic fiction* stole,
 And purged by *moral alchymy* the soul.

Hence artists grac'd and heroes nerved the age,
 The sons or pupils of a patriot stage.
 Hence in this forum of the virtues fir'd,
 Hence in this school of eloquence inspir'd,
 With bolder crest the dauntless warrior strode ;
 With nobler tongue the ardent statesman glow'd ;—
 And Athens reigned Minerva of the globe,
 First in the helmet fairest in the robe :
 In arms she triumphed, as in letters shone,
 Of taste the palace, and of war the throne.
 But lo ! where, rising in majestic flight,
 The Roman eagle sails th' expanse of light !
 His wings, like heaven's vast canopy, unfurl'd,
 Spread their broad plumage o'er the subject world.
 Behold ! he soars where golden Phœbus rolls,
 And perching on his car, o'erlooks the poles.
 Far, as revolves the chariot's radiant way,
 He wafts his empire o'er the tide of day ;
 From where it rolls on yon bright sea of suns,
 To where in light's remotest ebb it runs.

The globe half ravaged by the storm of war,
 The gates of Greece admit the victor's car ;

Chain'd to his wheels is captive science led,
 And taste transplanted blooms at Tiber's head.
 O'er the rude minds of empire's hardy race
 The opening *pupil* beam'd of letter'd grace :
 With charms so sweet, the houseless drama smil'd,
 That Rome adopted Athens' orphan child.
 Fledg'd by her hand, the Mantuan Swan aspir'd ;
 Aw'd by her power, e'en Pompey's self retired ;
 Sheath'd was the sword by which a world had bled ;
 And Janus blushing to his temple fled :
 The globe's proud butcher grew humanely brave ;
 Earth stanch'd her wounds, and Ocean hush'd his wave.

At length, like huge Enceladus depress'd,
 Groaning with slavery's mountain on their breast,
 The supine nations struggled from disgrace,
 And Rome, like Etna, totter'd from her base.

Thus set the sun of intellectual light,
 And, wrapt in clouds, lower'd on the Gothic night.
 Dark gloom'd the storm — the rushing torrent pour'd,
 And wide the deep Cimmerian deluge shower'd ;
 E'en learning's loftiest hills were cover'd o'er,
 And seas of *dulness* rolled without a shore ;
 Yet ere the surge Parnassus' top o'erflow'd,
 The banish'd Muses fled their bless'd abode.
 Frail was their ark, the heaven-topp'd seas to brave,
 The wind their compass and their helm the wave ;
 No port to cheer them, and no star to guide,
 From clime to clime, they rov'd the billowy tide ;
 At length by storms and tempests wafted o'er,
 They found an Ararat on Albion's shore.

Yet long so sterile prov'd the ravag'd age,
 That scarcely seem'd to vegetate the stage ;
 Nature, in dotage, second childhood mourn'd,
 And to her infant cradle had return'd.
 But hark ! her mighty rival sweeps the strings ! —
 Sweet Avon, flow not ! — 't is thy Shakspeare sings !
 With Blanchard's wing in fancy's heaven he soars ;
 With Herschel's eye another world explores ;
 Taught by the tones of his melodious song,
 The scenic muses tuned their barbarous tongue ;
 With subtle powers the crudest soul refined,
 And warm'd the Zembla of the frozen mind.

The world's new queen, Augusta, own'd their charms,
 And clasp'd the Grecian nymphs in British arms.
 Then shone the drama with imperial art,
 And made a province of the human heart.
 What nerve of verse can sketch the ecstatic view,
 When she and Garrick sigh'd their last adieu!
Description but a shadow's shade appears,
 When Siddons looks a nation into tears.

But ah! while thus unrivall'd reigns the Muse,
 Her soul o'erflows, and grief her face bedews;
 Sworn at the altar, proud oppression's foe,
 She weeps indignant for her Britain's wo.
 Long has she cast a fondly wishful eye
 On the pure climate of this western sky:
 And now, while Europe bleeds at every vein,
 And pinion'd forests shake the crimson'd main;
 While Gallia wall'd by foes collected stands,
 And hurls her thunders from a hundred hands:—
 Lur'd by a clime, where — hostile arms afar —
 Peace rolls luxurious in her dove-drawn car;
 Where freedom first awoke the human mind,
 And broke the enchantment which enslaved mankind;
 Behold Apollo seeks this liberal plain,
 And brings the Thespian goddess in his train.
 Oh! happy realm, to whom are richly given
 The noblest bounties of indulgent heaven;
 For whom has earth her wealthiest mine bestow'd,
 And commerce bridg'd old ocean's broadest flood!
 To you, a stranger guest, the drama flies;
 An angel wanderer in a pilgrim's guise!
 To charm the fancy, and to feast the heart,
 She spreads the banquet of the scenic art,
 By you supported, shall her infant stage
 Portray, adorn, and regulate, the age.
 When faction rages with intemperate sway,
 And grey-hair'd vices shame the face of day,
 Drawn from their covert to th' indignant pit,
 Be such the *game* to stock the *park of wit*;
 That *park*, where genius all his shafts may draw,
 Nor dread the terrors of a *forest law*.
 But, not to scenes of pravity confined,
 Here polish'd life an ample field shall find;

Reflected here, its fair *perspective* view,
The *stage*, the *camera* — the *landscape*, *you*.

Ye lovely fair whose circling beauties shine
A radiant galaxy of charms divine ;
Whose gentle hearts those tender scenes approve,
Where pity begs, or kneels adoring love : —
Ye sons of sentiment, whose bosom fire
The song of pathos and the epic lyre ;
Whose glowing souls with tragic grandeur rise,
When bleeds a hero or a nation dies : —
And ye, who thron'd on high a synod sit,
And rule the lofty atmosphere of wit ;
From whom a flash of comic lightning draws
A bursting thunder-clap of loud applause :
If here those eyes, whose tears, with peerless sway,
Have wept the vices of an age away ;
If here those lips, whose smiles, with magic art,
Have laughed the foibles from the cheated heart ;
On mirth's gay cheek can one gay dimple light ;
In sorrow's breast one passion'd sigh excite :
With nobler streams the buskin's grief shall fall ;
With pangs sublimer throb this breathing wall ;
Thalia too, more blythe, shall trip the stage,
Of care the wrinkles smooth, and thaw the veins of age.

And now, thou dome, by Freedom's patrons rear'd,
With beauty blazon'd and by taste rever'd ;
Apollo consecrates thy walls profane —
Hence be thou sacred to the Muses' reign !
In thee, *three ages* shall in *one* conspire ;
A SOPHOCLES shall swell his chastened lyre ;
A TERENCE rise, in native charms serene ;
A SHERIDAN display the perfect scene : —
And Athens, Rome, Augusta, blush to see
Their *virtues*, *beauty*, *grace*, all shine—combin'd in *THEE*.

Mr. Paine was then a very young man. Like many others, his connexion with a theatre was a source of evil to himself, of regret to his friends. Mr. Charles Powell, the speaker of this prize prologue (for which we are indebted to Carpenter's

Mirror of Taste, 1810), went to England while the theatre was being built, and the company he brought out now opened with *Gustavus Vasa* and *Modern Antiques*; Mr. and Mrs. Powell, Mr., Mrs., and Miss, Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Collins, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Messrs. Bartlett, Kenny, Nelson, and S. Powell, (brother to Charles, and afterwards manager), Mrs. Abbot, and Miss Harrison, who will be noticed by us, with the respect due to her talents and virtues, as Mrs. S. Powell.

Mr. Buckingham says, that "none of the rejected addresses were ever published," but gives us a prologue by an adversary to the theatre, which we think superior in some respects to Mr. Paine's prize poem. The salutary "if," the great poet's great peace-maker, renders these lines as acceptable to the friend of the Drama as to the enemy; and appropriate to the opening of any play-house whatever. The line in italics is a fair and palpable hit given to Mr. Paine and the directors.

PROLOGUE.

"Apollo consecrates thy walls profane."

YE sons of liberty, with awe profound,
Survey these walls and tread this classic ground;
And you, ye fair, whose footsteps here incline,
To pay your vespers at Apollo's shrine,
At this, his porch, in solemn stillness, hear
The friendly voice, which asks a list'ning ear.

If here the drama rapturous scenes disclose,
And all the heart with liveliest passion glows;
If in this dome, gay pleasure's luring smile
Enchant the soul, and midnight hours beguile;

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If here, entranced, ye nobler views forego,
 And cares domestic yield to *fancied* wo ;
 If, at your home, the babe or prattling boy
 Ye heedless left for visionary joy ;
 If, borne from far, the wit of Albion's race,
 As dissolute as gay, these walls disgrace ;
 If foreign brogues and foreign manners strive
 Your speech to dictate and the *ton* to give ;
 If alien vices, here unknown before,
 Come, shameless, to pollute Columbia's shore ;
 If, here profan'd, Religion's sacred name
 Be dress'd in ridicule and mark'd with shame ;
 If yon bright temples, which the good revere,
 And rites most sacred, meet the pointing sneer ;
 If dipp'd in gall, the unhallow'd comic rod
 Touch, unprovoked, the ministers of God ;
 If here, regardless of the Power on high,
 The impious buskin dare his wrath defy ;
 Indignant rise ! and fly these curs'd abodes,
 To vice devoted and to heathen gods ;
 And save, while yet ye may, your spotless name,
 Your own chaste virtue, and your country's fame.
 But if this voice be doom'd in vain to call,
 If deaf to counsel, ye approach this hall ;
 If here, triumphant, vice her standard rear,
 And ye, as votaries to her throne, repair ;
 If from this dome the dire contagion spread,
 And blushing virtue hide her drooping head ;
 O, may the lightning rend these walls profane,
 And desolation o'er the ruins reign !

A master of ceremonies was appointed by the trustees of the theatre, whose business it was to see that those who had taken seats should be accommodated according to contract — to direct the manner of taking up and putting down those who came to the door in coaches—and other matters of equal importance, besides suppressing “ all kinds of disorder and indecorum.” The trustees reserved

to themselves the power of dismissing any performer from the stage or orchestra for misconduct—a power to be exercised in the form of a request to the manager.

The season ended with the fourth of July, before which time, Mr. Buckingham says, “Powell and Baker quarrelled; from what cause is not very material to be known. The dispute was brought before the public in the newspapers, and ended in the secession of Baker, his wife, and daughter, from the company.” We hope the Bakers made bread elsewhere, but we hear no more of them.

CHAPTER XII.

Hallam and Hodgkinson open the New-York Theatre, December 1794 — Mr. Benjamin Carr — Mr. and Mrs. Marriott — Mr. Munto — Mr. Nelson — Mrs. Solomons — Mons. and Madame Gardie — Mrs. Faugeres' *Belisarius* — Fontainville Abbey — Mr. Fawcet — First plan of the Park Theatre — Mrs. Hallam withdrawn from the Stage — Hartford — Providence Theatre — The Friendly Club.

THE old American company, under Hallam and Hodgkinson, visited Philadelphia in the summer of 1794, and opened the old theatre in Southwark, but with little success, as might have been anticipated. The citizens had been satiated with dramatic novelties and excellencies. Such as were friends of the Drama gave their countenance to the splendid establishment of Wignell and Reinagle, and frowned on those who took advantage of the closing of the new house for the summer, to intrude upon the territory now devoted to the men who had so eminently gratified taste by the introduction of a company that might defy all opposition.

Hallam and Hodgkinson opened the theatre in John Street, New-York, on the 15th of December, 1794. The opening pieces were *Love in a Village*, and *The Liar*.

In the opera, Mr. Benjamin Carr, well known afterwards, and much esteemed in Philadelphia as

a teacher of music, made his first appearance in Young Meadows. His deportment was correct, but timid, and he never acquired or deserved reputation as an actor. His voice was mellow, and knowledge of music without the graces of action made him more acceptable to the scientific than to the vulgar auditor. We shall have occasion to mention him again, although he did not continue long on the stage. An overture, composed by him, was performed and much approved: the orchestra had been enlarged, and the best band collected that ever had been heard in the New-York Theatre.

Mr. Munto was brought forward in Eustace, but was merely tolerable. An actress of the name of Solomons appeared for the first time, but soon disappeared.

In the afterpiece, to any one who had not seen John Palmer's admirable Young Wilding, Hodgkinson would appear unrivalled.

Miss Chaucer was another debutante on this evening; but the strength of the company was in the performers heretofore mentioned. Foote's admirable comedy of *The Liar* is an alteration from Sir Richard Steele's *Lying Lover*. Still *The Liar* is Foote's.

Before the opening, a series of numbers on the theatre were commenced in the New-York Magazine for November 1794, called the Theatrical Register, which thus speaks: "The next month is the time fixed for commencing the first campaign

under the new managers," Hallam and Hodgkinson. After announcing the projected new house, and the intended abandonment of the John-Street theatre, the writer proceeds. "Under these circumstances, we have thought proper to begin this monthly publication, with a view to watch over the conduct of the managers and the company. A well regulated stage tends to suppress those paltry exhibitions with which every city is infested which has not a regular theatre, or during those seasons that the theatre is closed. The very refuse of society associate to exercise a profession which requires the utmost powers of humanity. Their audiences are composed of people like themselves."

The author of *The Father of an Only Child* had now written a second tragedy, taking his plot from Mrs. Radcliff's *Romance of the Forest*. He called it *Fontainville Abbey*. It was read to the author's associates, and communicated to Dr. Dwight. It was approved of by them, and accepted by the managers. The author's friend, Dr. E. H. Smith, finished at this time a drama called *Edwin and Angelina*, which was likewise accepted for performance.

The theatre at Newport was at this time under the direction of Harper. He had now a second wife, who was the heroine of his company. He was of course the hero, and appeared indeed a hero among those who formed his troop. Huggins, afterwards so noted in New-York, was one of the actors.

Three days after the opening, a Mr. Marriot was announced as from the Edinburgh boards. He was received quietly by the audience, and condemned by the critics of the newspapers. His wife, Mrs. Marriot, a pretty young woman, was likewise added to the company, but made no addition to its strength. The same must be repeated respecting Mr. Nelson, who appeared in the character of Lubin, in *The Quaker*.

In the orchestra was a genteel man of the name of Gardie; he was from St. Domingo, and brought with him his wife, a beautiful woman, who now made her appearance as the heroine of a pantomime called *Sophia of Brabant*. This was the first introduction of serious pantomime on our stage. The music was composed by M. Pelesier. The impression made by Madame Gardie was extremely great, and after a little time a second serious pantomime was got up, in which she was the principal attraction, called *La Foret Noire*. She is thus noticed in the Theatrical Register: "Her face, figure, and action, were enchanting. The appearance and manners of this lady are prepossessing, beyond any example on our stage."

Gardie, like most of the gentlemen composing the band, had seen better days. He appeared a melancholy man. The lady had all the fascinating vivacity of her nation. The termination of her triumphs over the people of America was a tragedy of real life, performed in the well-known house where a sublime drama of a very different charac-

ter had been enacted ; where Washington took leave of his companions in arms when he retired to his beloved Mount Vernon. The house is still in being at the corner of Pearl and Broad Streets. The story of the unfortunate Gardie and his fascinating wife will occupy another page.

In February, 1795, Mrs. Faugeres showed to several literary persons a tragedy called *Belisarius*. It was not played. Although it possessed merit, the lady had not that knowledge of the stage which is necessary to produce an acting play. It was afterwards published.

On the 17th of February, 1795, the second tragedy by the author of *The Father of an Only Child* was played and applauded. *Fontainville Abbey* was thus cast :

La Motte,	Mr. Hodgkinson.
Marquis,	King.
Peter,	Richards (alias Crosby).
Madame La Motte,	Mrs. Melmoth.
Adeline,	Hodgkinson.

The new tragedy was not announced as the production of an American, and we find in a publication of the day the following remark. "Can it be possible that the author thinks that such an avowal would operate against it?" There can be no doubt that he did think so, and no doubt that such an avowal at that time would have been enough to condemn the piece. The writers of the day, however, whether from mistaking its origin or not, did praise it in good set terms. This tragedy, after a

few repetitions, was suffered to sleep with its predecessor. It was published by Longworth some years afterwards, and is forgotten.

Among the inefficient performers brought out or added to the American Company, we are sorry to add the name of Hallam. Mr. Hallam brought forward his son, Mirvan Hallam, and he made his appearance, under his father's influence and instruction, as Belcour, in *The West Indian*. But he was anything rather than the elegant Belcour. He had neither talents nor education, and sunk into that insignificance which mediocrity in the fine arts must experience; nay, worse: discouraged by disappointed hopes, and without mental resources, that fate awaited him which sweeps into oblivion or worse so many who attempt this dangerous and alluring profession, and so many who have brighter prospects in other professions.

It was not to be expected that the inhabitants of New-York would be content with a paltry wooden theatre in John Street, when their neighbours and rivals, who outdid them at all times in fish and butter, had a new brick splendid building in Chestnut Street, the centre of Philadelphia fashion. Accordingly, a scheme for a new theatre, to surpass all new theatres, had now been some time in agitation. Eighty subscribers at 375 dollars each were obtained, making the sum of 30,000 dollars. This was to be sufficient. The number of subscribers was increased to 100; and more it was soon found were wanted. It was reported that

Hodgkinson was to go to England for performers, and leave his partner to manage in America ; but the partners were by this time, to use the common phrase, "at swords' points ;" neither was the one fitted for the mission abroad, nor the other to manage at home.

Mr. Fawcett made his appearance in Mahomet, and added to the number, rather than to the strength, of the company.

About this time Mrs. Melmoth, whose bulk had almost rendered her talents in tragedy unavailing, the towering Mrs. Melmoth, made herself ridiculous as the romping Roxalana, in the farce of *The Sultan*. So we remember Mrs. Abingdon playing Scrub, and Mrs. Webb, Falstaff.

A Mrs. Spencer appeared in Juliet, on the evening of the 2d of March, but made no impression, and deserved no support in so high a flight.

Mrs. Hallam, who had been mentioned as Miss Tuke, and who became the wife of the manager after the death of his first wife, long separated from him, had become a pleasing actress, and filled many of the first parts in comedy. About this time she was withdrawn from the stage, in consequence of an unfavourable impression made upon the audience by her appearance in the principal lady's character in Cumberland's comedy of *The Jew*. Mr. Hallam attributed the very strange exhibition to opium. The audience were shocked and disgusted. The actress was withdrawn from the public eye. Discontent ensued. Hodgkinson was

charged in an anonymous letter with being the enemy of Mrs. Hallam, and the cause of her being withdrawn, and he attributed the charge to Hallam. Discord and ill-will raged, and partisans were enlisted on both sides. A meeting was brought about by the writer, and a seeming reconciliation effected. Hodgkinson offered to sell out to a third party for 5,000 pounds, or 12,500 dollars.

Wignell, whose territory had been invaded by Hallam and Henry, and by Hallam and Hodgkinson, contemplated an invasion in return, and about this time commenced preparations for carrying the war into the enemy's country. A circus had been built in Greenwich Street, and occupied by a company of equestrians under a man of the name of Ricketts, and Wignell made proposals to him for his circus as a summer theatre, confident that not only novelty, but strength, ensured success. Ricketts declined the offer, and was charged in the Daily Advertiser of March 14th, 1795, with having refused "through fear of displeasing a small part of the public, or rather some gentleman of the profession," and by that refusal having prevented the citizens of New-York seeing "some of the best actors on the continent." Four days afterwards, the charge was answered from behind the curtain, saying, the refusal was in consequence of the citizens being opposed to a second theatre, and denying that the best actors, "or near the best, are in Philadelphia;" thus denying what had not been asserted. The writer goes on to praise the New-

York managers, and to show that the citizens were bound to support Mr. Hodgkinson, who had become a resident in New-York, "in preference to any part of the continent." To keep the good will of Ricketts, the managers put off a play on the 24th March, rather than interfere with the performances of the circus. Sheridan and *The School for Scandal* gave way to Ricketts and clown.

Boston had before this established a theatre within her precincts, and now Hartford imitated most unwisely her example. Hartford was a mere village at that time. What may be a good in a large and populous city, may be an evil if not under the supervision of the government and other strict regulations, where the population is sparse. But a theatre had been recently erected in Hartford, and Hodgkinson, with part of the old American Company, opened it in August, 1795.

Providence, Rhode Island, had likewise her play-house, and the remainder of the company were led by Hallam to that rising and flourishing town.

The two divisions united and proceeded to Boston, where they continued until the end of January, 1796. But before we follow them thither, we must bring up the history of the Boston stage to this time.

From July 4th, 1794, till December 15th, the theatre of Boston was closed. On the last named day theatrical representations recommenced with *As You like It* and *Rosina*.

The company consisted of Mr. and Mrs. C.

Powell, Mr. and Mrs. S. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Collins, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, Messrs. Bartlett, Taylor, Kenny, Heely, Hipworth, Villiers, Mrs. Heelyer (afterwards Mrs. Graupner) and Miss Harrison (afterwards Mrs. Dickinson).

Mr. Taylor gained great celebrity in Boston by his personation of Octavian; but it must be remembered that no other Octavian had been seen. We remember Mr. Taylor's Octavian. It was in our estimation at the time a failure. It was remarkable for what would be unnoticed in 1832, a growth of beard cherished for the purpose.

Mr. Hipworth was at the time thought highly of in the part of Sheva, then first played in Boston, and in Vapid. Hodgkinson had not yet been seen. But Mr. Hipworth is praised for something beyond good playing; "he was respected," says Mr. Buckingham, "for his good conduct, both before the public and in his private life." That he should have personated with success the varied characters of Sheva, Vapid, Cato, Shylock, Rover, Beverley, Petruchio, Jaffier, and Jaques, proves more than ordinary talent. This gentleman died in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1795.

Mr. Jones was the favourite low comedian of the place at that time, and a rebellious subject of King Powell's. It appears from a circumstance related by Mr. Buckingham, that the monarch could not decide the differences which arose among his subjects, in respect to parts, and that Mr. Jones could. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Hughes both

laid claim to the part of Cowslip, in *The Agreeable Surprise*. One evening when it was performed, they both prepared for the character, both came on the stage at the same instant, and each presented her bowl of cream to Lingo. Jones, who was playing the part of the pedagogue, received the offering from his wife, and the rival Cowslip was obliged to retire from the contest." He died in Charleston, S. Carolina, in 1797.

As the name of Jones might mislead, we will remark that the comedians, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, were not the same we have elsewhere mentioned. The Mrs. Jones, mother of Mrs. Simpson, who was the favourite of New-York in the winter of 1805-6, could have had no rival as Cowslip. Her husband died at Charleston in the year 1806.

A play was performed in Boston, written by a citizen of the United States, called *The Medium, or Happy Tea-party*. It was not played a second time, and was not printed. It was attributed for a time to a clergyman, but denied by him as his offspring.

Mr. C. Powell became bankrupt; and at the end of the season, Colonel John S. Tyler was appointed manager by the proprietors. Colonel Tyler made an arrangement with Messrs. Hallam and Hodgkinson to bring on the New-York company to Boston; and, having engaged a part of the former Boston company, the whole formed a very effective and numerous corps; made more so by the addition of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Tyler, Mr. Jefferson, Mrs. Brett, and Miss Ara-

bella Brett, all of whom arrived from England and joined the New-York Company.

Mr. Buckingham mentions it as worthy of record that the tragedies of *Macbeth* and *Othello* were played for the first time this season, Hodgkinson playing the hero of each piece.

The company of Hallam and Hodgkinson closed their performances in Boston on the 20th of January, 1796, and opened in New-York on the 10th of February following.

In the course of the spring of 1796, the project of building a new play-house in Boston was started, a subscription opened, and almost immediately filled up. Such was the prevailing taste for theatrical performances, that men of capital were willing to invest their property to almost any amount in the erection of theatres; and mechanics did not hesitate to take shares in payment for their labour. Contracts were made, the building went on rapidly, and, before the first of January, 1797, the Haymarket theatre, an immense wooden pile, proudly overtopping every other building in the metropolis, was completed. It is believed that the idea of raising a rival house was first suggested by C. Powell, or some of his friends, who thought him injured by the proprietors of the Federal Street theatre; but there was another and more potent principle exerted in producing the establishment than mere theatrical rivalry, and that was political feeling. Political excitement between the parties then denominated Federal and Jacobin

was high and furious. Every man joined himself to one or the other of those parties, and each was jealous of the ascendancy of the other. It was suspected, and not without some reason, that party politics, which pervaded almost every private as well as public concern, had some influence in the management of the Federal Street house; and that the trustees, who were all of the Federal school of politics, had upheld and justified the manager in the introduction of pieces tending to provoke the resentments and animosities of their political opponents. It was customary (and very naturally so), for the actors, who were all emigrants from the English stage, to interpolate jests and witticisms at the expense of the French, who were then at war with England; and these often gave great offence, excited disapprobation, and sometimes created great uproar in the house. The anti-Federal (or as it was then called, the Jacobin) party were so exceedingly sensitive, that they took great offence at the representation of *The Poor Soldier*, pretending that the character of Bagatelle was a libel on the character of the whole French nation. They were encouraged in this by the French consul, then residing at Boston. A pretty smart quarrel was excited between him and the editor of the Boston Gazette; and the controversy at last became so bitter, that a mob on one occasion attempted to stop the performance of this farce, and did considerable damage to the benches, doors, and windows, of the offending house.

After a short recess, which commenced about the last of May, Williamson again drew up the curtain of the Federal Street stage. He retained many of the principal performers of the preceding season, and enriched the company by adding the talents of Chalmers, Bates, and Mrs. Whitlock. Chalmers was introduced on the first night of the season, as Vapid in *The Dramatist*. Mrs. Whitlock came out as Isabella, in Southern's *Fatal Marriage*, and repeated the part several times within a short period. Bates was reserved till the season was near two months advanced, and then brought forward as Justice Woodcock, in Bickerstaff's delightful opera *Love in a Village*, and Sharp in *The Lying Valet*. Jones, who had returned from Charleston, to pass the summer in New-England, joined the company at the commencement of the season, and played for several weeks with a popularity equal to that which attended his first performances. Mr. and Mrs. Rowson, Mr. and Mrs. Hogg, and their daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Solomon, with two daughters, and Mr. Downie, were in the Federal Street company of this season.

In the month of December, the Haymarket theatre was completed. It was an immense building, constructed entirely of wood. It had three tiers of boxes and a gallery. The lobbies and staircases were spacious and convenient. On each side of the stage was a suite of dressing-rooms, constructed in wings, projecting from the second story to the main edifice, and nearly on a level with the stage.

The entrance to the pit was up a flight of steps. This theatre was first opened on Monday, the 26th day of December. C. Powell had made a voyage to England during the preceding summer, to complete his company by the enlistment of recruits, and returned with Mr. and Mrs. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, three Misses Westray (daughters of Mrs. Simpson by a former marriage), and a corps of ballet-dancers and mimes. Among these were the celebrated French performers, Francisquy, Val, Legé, and their wives. The company was numerous, and embraced a great variety and excellence of talent. The opening play was *The Belle's Stratagem*, which was thus cast: Doricourt, S. Powell; Sir George Touchwood, Marriot (first appearance); Flutter, C. Powell; Saville, Dickson (first appearance on any stage); Courtall, Taylor; Villars, a young American; Hardy, Simpson (first appearance); Letitia Hardy, Mrs. S. Powell; Lady Frances, Miss Hughes; Miss Ogle, Miss Harrison (afterwards Mrs. Dickson); Mrs. Rackett, Mrs. Simpson (first appearance). The comedy was succeeded by a ballet, pantomime, &c. in which the whole corps displayed their powers to the utmost extent.

On the Wednesday following, Barrett made his first bow to the American audience in the character of Ranger. Mrs. Barrett's first appearance was in Mrs. Beverley, in Moore's popular tragedy of *The Gamester*.

The acting management of the Federal Street

stage devolved on J. B. Williamson, whom we have mentioned elsewhere as the tragedian of the summer theatre in the Haymarket, London, where tragedies were very rare, and Mrs. Wells the heroine. We remember hearing Williamson, with all the swelling port of *My Lord Duke*, tell Hodgkinson that Tyler, the Yankee manager, had *run away*, and then, thank heaven ! that he was not a *regular bred manager*.

Williamson's wife, the Miss Fontenelle of the English stage, was a very fine actress in Little Pickle and romps. She was the original Moggy M'Gilpin of the Highland Reel. She was powerful, but her playfulness lacked delicacy.

From Mr. Buckingham we learn that "Mrs. Arnold, from Covent Garden, made her *debut* in Rosetta, in *Love in a Village*." She is mentioned with praise, and is supposed to have died many years afterwards in Virginia.

We make use of the accurate information of Mr. Buckingham for the origin of the Boston Haymarket, and the opening of the Federal Street theatre under J. B. Williamson.

In December, Mr. William Charles White, who will be better known to the reader by our account of his attempts and failure in New York, made his first appearance with great applause as a boy on the Boston stage.

While the house, first called the new theatre, and since the Park theatre, in New York, was building, the following queries were suggested by

one who had afterwards the direction of it, accompanied by care and misery, but at this time happy in competence, ardent wishes for the happiness of his fellow-creatures, delightful society of enlightened friends, and daily pursuit of knowledge. "Is not the present situation of the drama in New-York, while the power of regulating it seems to be in the subscribers to a new building, a good opportunity for effecting a reform? It is very much wanted. May I not address a letter to the subscribers through the medium of the press, and show the power which a theatrical establishment possesses of being eminently useful? May not errors be pointed out in former and existing establishments? The use which governments have made of the stage shows the absurdity of allowing the erroneous opinions of Europe to be propagated in the most alluring form, in opposition to those which our superior form of government is calculated to generate. May I not offer a plan for a more perfect mode of conducting theatres in this country? Cannot the stage be made a vehicle for the furtherance of useful knowledge, second to none but the press?" Such were the thoughts and wishes of one who on trial found circumstances too strong for his desires of reform, and who, after a struggle of years (with ruined health and fortunes), gave up the contest, without giving up the wish or the hope.

Charles Brockden Brown had been destined for the bar, and received early education accordingly,

but disappointed his friends by positively refusing to enter into the profession of the law. He became intimate with Elihu Hubbard Smith, while the latter studied under the physicians of Philadelphia, and Smith having determined to practise in New-York, Brown visited that city and joined those who have been denominated pioneers, becoming a member of the Friendly Club. Already he had commenced novel writing, and the young physician, the future novelist, and the dramatist, soon became inseparable. A young lawyer, William Johnson, well known since as a reporter, being likewise a member of the club, commenced his career about the same time with Elihu H. Smith, and they established themselves in the house of Alderman Waddell, in Pine Street, near Nassau Street. This is the same Alderman Waddell, who became a subject for the theatrical historian by selling play-tickets in conjunction with David Matthews, mayor of New-York, in the year 1777. At that time the alderman was a member of a club of wits, very dissimilar to the Friendly Club both in habits and politics; but they were certainly wits, although as certainly bon-vivants. The names of William Franklin, the son of Benjamin, and of James Rivington, the printer of the Royal Gazette, are enough to justify the character here given of that club of 1777. Waddell lived now in the same house with Johnson and Smith, occupying upper apartments, and perhaps his tenants did not see him once a month, so regular were

all parties, and so different their habits of regularity.

The apartments of Johnson and Smith were the resort of the members of their club, and the novelist was divided between them and the dramatist; sleeping at Bachelor's Hall, and otherwise domesticated in the family of the author of *The Father*; until a long and severe illness rendered it necessary to remove him altogether to the house of the latter. While thus situated, and surrounded by such friends, we shall see that the dramatist was induced to become a manager of the New-York theatre.

CHAPTER XIII.

1796—Mr. and Mrs. Johnson—Mr. and Mrs. Tyler—Mr. Jefferson—Mrs. and Miss Brett—Mr. and Mrs. Cleaveland—Mons. and Madame Val—M. Francisquy—M. Dubois—Opera of *The Archers*—Mr. Hogg—A third Manager added to the partnership of Messrs. Hallam and Hodgkinson, whose violent quarrels had threatened destruction to the Company—Endeavours to mediate—Williamson of the Haymarket, London—Revived Quarrels—Mrs. Hallam withdrawn, and a new Agreement among the Directors—Company at Hartford—John D. Miller—Old American Company open in New-York, 1796—Mysterious Monk—Arrival of Wignell with Mrs. Merry, Mr. Cooper, &c.—Godwin—Holcroft—Edwin and Angelina—Bourville Castle—John Blair Linn—Doctor Elihu Hubbard Smith—Tell Truth and Shame the Devil—The Comet—Mr. Miller—Vexations of Theatrical Management—Dialogue with a would-be Actor—Wignell opens the Philadelphia theatre, December 5, 1790—Mrs. Merry—Mr. Cooper.

FEBRUARY 10th, 1796, was a remarkable era in the history of the theatre of New-York. We have seen that Hallam and Hodgkinson had successfully quartered their troop upon the good people of Boston, to the mutual satisfaction of the strangers and citizens. They now opened the house in John Street, New-York, with the good old comedy of *The Provoked Husband*, and by a very judicious cast of the play showed an accession of strength, as well as numbers, which warranted the success they met with this season. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Tyler, Mr. Jefferson, and Mrs. Brett, all made their debut at the

same time:— Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Brett in Sir Francis and Lady Wronghead ; Mr. and Mrs. Tyler as Manley and Lady Grace ; Mr. Jefferson as Squire Richard, and Mrs. Johnson as Lady Townley. We will speak of these in succession, according to our estimate of their value as players.

Mrs. Johnson was a tall, elegant, beautiful young woman, whose taste in dress made her a model for the belles of the city, and whose manners were as fascinating off as on the stage. Her irreproachable character and demeanour rendered her playfulness harmless to herself or others ; for the most licentious would see at a glance that he must not approach, in that character, within the circle of her influence. She was almost too tall, yet the spectator did not wish her shorter, and if any movement appeared like an approach to awkwardness, it was only to be attributed to modesty. She had not the self-possession of Miss Farren or Mrs. Merry, though more like the first than the last. She was more beautiful, but not so good an actress as either, and at the time we now speak of, America had not seen so perfect a fine lady in comedy. This lady made her first appearance in Mr. Brunton's company, and Mrs. Merry has told the writer that she could not recognise in the elegant Mrs. Johnson the tall, awkward girl of that period. She had prudently accepted the hand of Mr. Johnson, much her senior, but one who could protect and instruct her. She lived respected and

esteemed, and, after several visits to her native land, she died in America, in the arms of a beloved and most worthy daughter.

As an actor, Mr. Jefferson stands next. Perhaps, as an actor, he ought to have been placed first, but "place aux dames" where any doubt exists. He was then a youth, but even then an artist. Of a small and light figure, well formed, with a singular physiognomy, a nose perfectly Grecian, and blue eyes full of laughter, he had the faculty of exciting mirth to as great a degree by power of feature, although handsome, as any ugly-featured low comedian ever seen. The Squire Richard of Mr. Jefferson made a strong impression on the writer; his Sadi, in *The Mountaineers*, a stronger; and, strange to say, his Verges, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, a yet stronger.

Joseph Jefferson was invited to this country by Mr. C. Powell, for Boston (he paying the passage money and agreeing to give seventeen dollars per week salary), and arrived in 1795. Powell having failed, Jefferson engaged with Hallam and Hodgkinson. He was the son of Mr. Jefferson, a contemporary and friend of Garrick. Mr. J. Jefferson had been under Bernard's management in England. We shall often have occasion to mention this excellent comedian, who lived among us, admired as an actor, and esteemed as a man, for six-and-thirty years, paying the debt of nature while this work is passing through the press in 1832.

Joseph Tyler was, at the time of his debut in New-York, a manly figure, had had good provincial practice as an actor and singer, and was a most valuable acquisition to the American stage. In time, he became the representative of what, on the French theatre, is called the *père noble*, and long continued a favourite on the stage and an estimable man in private life. That his appearance and manner on the stage and elsewhere should have been so highly respectable is the more to be remarked, and is the more creditable to him, as he was originally a practitioner of a trade certainly not high in the scale among ordinary occupations. Mr. Tyler was in early life a barber, and consequently an uneducated man. It is the more to his honour that he could represent the *père noble* on the stage, and play the part of the "noblest work of God," an honest man, in society. He does not stand alone among histrionics in the circumstance of having sprung from the barber's-shop to the stage. Mr. Thomas King, long at the head of his profession as a comic actor in London, was likewise a knight of the pole. Bernard says, King was extremely "sensitive of any allusions to his early occupation," and tells, on the authority of Mrs. Clive, the celebrated actress, who had retired in honourable competency from the stage, the following anecdote :

"In playing a particular character one evening which required a stick, King mislaid his own, and seized another at the wings which was too large

and clumsy. Garrick met him as he was going on, and observed it: 'Eh, eh, Tom, what's that?—That won't do;—cudgel, Irish shilalagh—you're a man in high life—ought to have a gold-headed cane.' King was conscious of the impropriety, and Garrick's observation nettled him; he therefore answered, rather testily, that 'he had lost his own, and must use that or go on without one.' 'Curse it, Tom, said the manager, 'the people will say you're going back to your old business, and have brought your *pole* with you.' King threw down the stick, and instantly ran to find another." It is but fair to add, that, in theatrical biography, Mr. King is said to have been educated for a barrister. Mr. Tyler's early destination was communicated to the writer by his friend Johnson, who emigrated with him, and was afterwards his partner as a manager. Mr. Tyler died January, 1823, aged 72 years and 4 days.

Mrs. Brett comes next in order. She was the wife of Brett of Covent Garden and the Haymarket, London, and mother of Mrs. Hodgkinson, Mrs. King, and Miss Arabella Brett, the latter of whom now arrived with her. She was a good actress, and filled the line of comedy old women better than had heretofore been seen.

Mrs. Tyler was no addition to the strength of the company.

It will be perceived from this account of the accessions made to the already powerful company of Hallam and Hodgkinson, that the comedy of *The*

Provoked Husband must have given satisfaction to all, and delight to most of the audience. Mr. Hodgkinson spoke an opening address, written by Mr. Milns. It was common-place in the serious, and silly in the attempted comic parts. But Hodgkinson could make any thing pass at that time, and with eclat.

On the 12th of February, Miss Broadhurst and Miss Brett made their first appearance, as Yarico and Narcissa, in the Opera of *Inkle and Yarico*. Mrs. Hodgkinson playing Wowski, her husband Trudge, and Tyler Inkle. Miss Broadhurst we have spoken of as one of Wignell's company. Miss Brett was a child in years, but a woman in appearance, with a powerful voice as a singer, but destitute of personal beauty. Mr. Tyler's first singing character established him in the favour of the audience.

Mr. and Mrs. Cleaveland were brought out the succeeding night, he playing Zaphna and she Palmira in Voltaire's tragedy of *Mahomet*. They were genteel and useful performers; young and handsome, but in talent not above mediocrity.

In the beginning of March, some French performers were engaged: M. and Madame Val, M. Francisquy, and M. Dubois. Francisquy became useful and attractive in pantomime; these performers supported the beautiful and very fine actress, Madame Gardie, in serious or heroic exhibitions of that description.

The story of William Tell and the struggle for

Helvetic liberty was at this time moulded into dramatic form by the author of *The Father of an Only Child*, and with songs, choruses, &c., was called an opera. The subject was suggested to the author by an English play, recently published, which was utterly unfit and perhaps not intended for the stage. Mr. Carr, for whom the principal singing part was allotted, composed the music. Comic parts were introduced with some effect. Schiller's play on the same subject did not then exist. We have had, of late years, a popular English drama on the same subject, made more so by the talents of an American actor.

I find the following curious passage in Keysler's Travels. "At the end of this hall," the arsenal at Bern, "is an excellent wooden image of the famous William Tell; he is aiming at the apple on the head of his little son, who stands opposite to him; the hands and the eyes are admirably expressed. He appears to have been a tall, raw-boned man, with a very honest countenance; and, according to the fashion of the times, one half of his coat is red, and the other black and yellow stripes alternately; his breeches and stockings are of one single piece, and an arrow sticks in his coat behind his head; the boy is laughing, as apprehending no danger."

The writer of the American play gave it a very bad title, *The Archers*.

On the 30th March, 1796, Mr. John Hogg, long a favourite actor in New-York, made his first appearance on the American stage, perhaps on any

stage, and so unpromising was it that he did not appear again this season. He had given his name to an actress, who is recorded in a previous chapter of our history as having come to this country in the year 1767, as Miss Ann Storer, being saved from the burning ship at sea, and landed at Newport, Rhode Island. Mrs. Hogg was many years the representative of comedy old women, and an excellent actress.

The character chosen for Mr. Hogg to appear in was that of Virolet, in *The Mountaineers*. He was no otherwise qualified for the part than as he was a good-looking young man. Always diffident and easily disconcerted, he never received favour or deserved it from the audience until he fell into the line of comic old men. Once possessed of popular favour, he played many comic parts well. Whenever it was his ill fate to be thrust into a tragedy, he invariably lost his recollection, and as the time for his appearance approached would be in perfect agony, every moment losing his hold of the words of the part, and conscious that he only went on the stage to stand mute or to utter nonsense. On such occasions he would make a desperate effort, and generally shouted out in a voice louder than necessary, and perfectly distinct, something either unintelligible or foreign to the purpose. On one occasion, having to tell Cooper, who represented the hero, that one of his generals could not be in the field for fifteen days, Hogg roared, "he says he cannot bring his powers these fifteen years!" This

was received with bursts of laughter; the actor standing like a statue, and perfectly unconscious that he had said any thing amiss.

He made his first very great impression on the audience in *John Bull*, when he played Job Thornberry. We shall often have occasion to mention honest John Hogg in the course of these annals.

About this time, Hodgkinson pressed upon the author of *The Father of an Only Child*, whom we have called the dramatist, a purchase of his half in the concerns of the theatre, with the tempting bait of having the sole control of the pieces to be brought before the public. The proposition was made on the 19th of March. The bait took. The enthusiastic dramatist seriously persuaded himself that it was his duty to take the direction of so powerful an engine as the stage; his thoughts at the time lay open before me. "If the effects of the stage are as great as its friends and enemies have concurred in representing it, surely I should have the power to do much good." The power of the engine is certain; his powers to direct it he ought to have doubted.

The proposer was to obtain Hallam's concurrence; the price of the purchase to be valued by the purchaser; time of payment unlimited; Mr. Hodgkinson's services as an actor and manager warranted. Tempting prospects of profit were displayed. It was stated that the theatre had cleared, in the last six weeks, between four and five thousand dollars. The power (not forgetting the power

to bring out his own plays) offered to the dramatist, the control of the stage in a large portion of the continent, and wealth unbounded, were irresistible ; we shall see how the visions were realized. Hallam's concurrence was obtained by Hodgkinson in April, and every arrangement made for the dramatist to commence manager in May.

On the 18th of April, 1796, the opera of *The Archers* was performed for the first time, and received with great applause. The music by Carr was pleasing, and well got up. Hodgkinson and Mrs. Melmoth were forcible in Tell and wife. The comic parts told well with Hallam and Mrs. Hodgkinson, although Conrad ought to have been given to Jefferson. The piece was repeatedly played, and was printed immediately.

At a meeting of the two managers and the dramatist for the purpose of signing articles of agreement, Hallam began to raise difficulties. "There may be a difference among us, who is to decide? You two being a majority, am I to be bound by your acts?" It was replied, that, as his property was equal to that of the two, his voice in every thing relative to property must be equal to both his colleagues. This appeared satisfactory, but he still declined signing the papers. The dramatist now found that he had to be mediator between two men who were jealous of each other, and at variance in the most violent degree; and, on the 1st of May, Hallam laid open his grievances, complaining of Hodgkinson's encroachments, and usur-

pations of power and of parts ; having deprived him of all those characters which gave him consequence with the public, either playing them, or contriving to keep the plays from being acted. His wife, he said, was likewise aggrieved, misrepresented, and deprived of her consequence by the introduction of others. She had been restored to the stage after the exposure above mentioned. Mr. Hallam professed perfect confidence in the new manager, and appealed to him for justice. The dramatist promised to see Hodgkinson immediately, and did so. He ridiculed Hallam's wish to keep young parts from him, declared that they were his right, and he would have them or quit the stage. After repeated mediatorial visits, the characters in dispute were reduced to six, and then to four — Orestes, Hamlet, Ranger, and Benedict : these Hodgkinson swore he would have, or not play, although he had just bound himself to the new manager and purchaser. The dramatist, in all this disagreeable business, consulted and followed the advice of his friends. Hallam declared that he was " as much surprised at Hodgkinson's demand of the *parts* as if he had demanded his tables and chairs." This shows the view actors took of this subject. A dispute for *parts* appears ridiculous to the public ; but upon the *line of business* played depends the favour of the actor with the audience, and his emolument from salary and benefit.

The new manager by degrees quieted, if not reconciled, his colleagues, and entered upon the business of directing a theatre with the approbation of his former friends and associates, and without immediate change in his mode of life. As the theatrical season was drawing to a close, benefits were the only concern of the actors, and the principal occupation of all connected with the theatre. But the discord between Hallam and Hodgkinson was flaming out daily, and made the situation of their associate any thing but enviable. Hodgkinson threw out hints that he would leave the company; said he was subjected to insult from Hallam's family; "if he did stay with the company, he would have a higher salary for himself and wife than Hallam and his wife received, but would not be joint manager with Hallam." The latter being told this demand respecting salary, swore solemnly, that Hodgkinson should not, in *his* company, have a higher salary than himself. Such are the scenes in theatres, such in many other places; but actors seem to be jostled against each other more than most men. The new manager began to desire a retreat from the incessant quarrels of those with whom he had connected himself.

Williamson, remembered by us as the principal tragedian at the summer theatre in London in 1786, where tragedies were not the order of the day, and a kind of stiff, handsome "walking gentleman" of comedy, was now a manager of one of the

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Boston theatres, and at this time in New-York. He stimulated Hodgkinson to hostility against Hallam. Wignell, by offers of advantageous terms to Hodgkinson, if he would come to Philadelphia, strengthened his opposition to his first partner ; indeed he knew that he could command a great engagement anywhere.

With his friend, Doctor E. H. Smith, the unfortunate dramatist repaired to Hodgkinson, on the last day of May, 1796, and demanded, " Will you or will you not remain in the old American Company as a performer and assistant manager according to your agreement ?" He hesitated, wished that his answer " should be deferred until the crisis between him and Hallam had passed." He was told that his answer must determine the conduct of the man he had invited into the business ; and he answered, " If I stay, my salary must be raised, and that damnably," thus at once destroying the basis of the agreement. " I have received my answer," was the reply, and the friends departed.

As Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Tyler had been engaged by letters to them from Hodgkinson, written in his own name, he considered them as bound to him, and threatened to withdraw them from the company. The rivalry between Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Hallam, the latter supported by her husband's influence, rendered this a probable event. Mr. Johnson anxiously asked the new director if Hallam and Hodgkinson

were likely to be reconciled. He was answered that Hodgkinson said he would leave the company, but that all engagements should be fulfilled. He replied that he and his wife wished to remain in New-York, but feared the Hallams, and complained of Mrs. Hallam particularly, as an actress and woman.

After several letters from the new manager on the one part, submitted by him to his friend Smith, and intemperate answers to them from Hodgkinson, the latter made apologies and concessions, gave up the demand for exorbitant salaries, and expressed a wish for reconciliation with Hallam. The mediator represented all this to Hallam, who expressed his wish for accommodation, and made proposals to relinquish parts and make an equitable adjustment ; but two days afterwards he retracted, and said that his friends advised him not to give up any thing. Hodgkinson now proposed to leave the company, vesting all his property in it and all his rights in the new manager, and settling his accounts with Mr. Hallam. He wrote to this purpose to Hallam, and it was agreed upon. Under this new arrangement, engagements were offered to the principal performers, but here difficulties arose ; Mrs. Johnson, always of consequence, but rendered more so by the withdrawal of Mrs. Hodgkinson, could not be reconciled to sharing business with a woman like Mrs. Hallam, and putting herself under the direction of such a woman's husband. Hallam became furious

on hearing these objections, and the dramatist, utterly disgusted, made known to him and to Hodgkinson his determination to relinquish the connexion.

The dramatist consulted Mr. Hugh Gaine, who agreed that Hallam could only be saved from ruin by withdrawing his wife from the stage, and undertook to deliver a letter to him stating that her continuance in the theatre would prevent the fulfilling of the recent engagement with the writer, who at the same time offered to give up accounts and money, and retire. Mr. Gaine delivered this letter, and advised Hallam to remove his wife from the stage, but said he did not believe he would do it. "You have done your duty," said this worthy man to the dramatist, "and so have I."

Hallam, by the advice of his oldest friends, among whom were Mr. Gaine and Mr. M^c Cormick, concluded to remove Mrs. Hallam from the eye of the public; and the dramatist, supposing all settled to Hodgkinson's satisfaction, was surprised by his demand for more of the parts played by Hallam, and finally by his avowing that he had engaged himself to Wignell, having made the first overture, in consequence of which Wignell had been in New-York, and Anderson, his agent, was at this time on the spot to secure Hodgkinson. The letters were produced, and the person he had been employing as a mediator, with the view of keeping him with Hallam and in New-York, now for the first time knew of the long existing nego-

ciation. Hodgkinson consulted his friends, and determined to break off with Wignell and remain in New-York. The consequence of this was that new articles of agreement were entered into between Hallam, Hodgkinson, and Dunlap, for two years, the latter having that power which he still hoped to use for good purposes; but the first two were in a state of bitter enmity, and so continued.

1st mention
of his name?

Let us for a moment pause and consider, merely as a curious speculation, what must have been the changes in theatrical history, if the mediation of the new manager had not prevented Hodgkinson's leaving the New-York for the Philadelphia theatre. The acquisition of Mr. and Mrs. Hodgkinson, Mrs. Brett, and Miss Brett, with probably Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, would have prevented Wignell's voyage to England, now on the eve of taking place, and America might never have seen Mrs. Merry and Mr. Cooper, and of course all those events hanging on their presence and actions must have given place to others; what, we know not. Thus it is that the actions of one man, either in the great or little world, change the whole course of future events to eternity. Thus the strife and bickerings in palaces and play-houses have their influence in circles so wide that the imagination cannot keep pace with them, or the human mind trace their consequences.

It appears necessary to give some brief statement of these difficulties and disagreements, and yet I fear the reader will say, "What do I care for

the quarrels and jealousies of these men?" The subject has been stated as briefly as possible, and only because future transactions would be unintelligible without this information, and because truth requires it.

July the 4th, 1796, found the old American Company at Hartford, and their new manager with them. The day, as usual, was a day of rejoicing and festivity. The theatre of Hartford was opened on the 11th with *The Provoked Husband* and *Purse*, and it immediately appeared that the receipts could not support such a company of comedians.

About this time, John D. Miller made his first appearance on the stage as Clement, in *The Deserted Daughter*. He was a good-looking young man, but destitute of education or talent. He wisely retired in a few years, became rich, an alderman, and a 4th of July orator. These civic honours entitle Mr. Miller to more space on our pages than any distinction he gained as a player. He was a native of New-York, and the son of Mr. Philip Miller, a German baker. John was born in 1771, and, preferring the ever-changing temperature of the stage to the eternal heat of the oven, he determined to be a hero. After fighting against nature for a few years, he wisely became a partner with his brother, a grocer, and being a *tall man*, soon became an orator among the sachems of Tammany Hall, a common-council-man, and alderman.

Miller's debut is fresh in our recollection, as con-

nected with the admirable acting of Jefferson in the character of Item, the attorney, whose clerk Miller represented. Worked up to a phrensy of feigned passion, Jefferson, a small-sized man, seized Miller by the breast, and, while uttering the language of rage, shook him violently. Miller, not aware that he was to be treated so roughly, was at first astonished ; but, as Jefferson continued shaking and the audience laughing, the young baker's blood boiled, and calling on his physical energies, he seized the comedian with an Herculean grasp, and threw him off violently. Certainly John D. Miller never played with so much spirit or nature on any subsequent occasion. This may remind the reader of John Kemble's regret at the death of Suett, the low comedian, who played Weazel to Kemble's Penruddock. The lament of the tragedian is characteristic, as told by Kelly. "My dear Mic, Penruddock has lost a powerful ally in Suett ; sir, I have acted the part with many Weazels, and good ones too, but none of them could work up my passions to the pitch Suett did ; he had a comical impertinent way of thrusting his head into my face, which called forth all my irritable sensations ; the effect upon me was irresistible." Such was the effect of Jefferson's shaking upon Miller, and Jefferson found the Yankee's arm equally irresistible.

On the 19th of July, the new manager, after several delightful days, passed with his friends Dwight, Alsop, and Cogswell, left Connecticut,

leaving the business altogether with Hodgkinson. It was intended that the company should remove to Philadelphia, and open the old theatre in Southwark. Funds were already wanted, and the dramatist, instead of reaping a harvest, had advanced between four and five hundred dollars. His partners made no offers to assist in the expenses necessary to remove the company and repair the theatre, and the plan was given up.

Mr. William King, who has been mentioned as one of the recruits brought out by Henry at the same time with Hodgkinson, and who married Mrs. Hodgkinson's sister, died early in October, 1796, at Norfolk, in the flower of his youth, a victim to vice. He had left New-York and joined the Virginia Company, now a distinct corps, and moving from one town to another in that state which had first received the Thespians in 1752.

About this time died Mrs. Pownall, once Mrs. Wrihten of Drury-lane theatre.

The summer had now passed. Hodgkinson had continued with the company; Hallam on Long Island, in retirement; and their partner at Perth Amboy, where Charles B. Brown was an inmate with him, and occasionally Elihu H. Smith. In September he was engaged in New-York, preparing for the opening of the campaign.

By the 19th of September, the company had assembled at New-York, and Hodgkinson demanded a rise in his wife's salary, or threatened she should not play. This was the commencement of vio-

lations of agreement, which, with other disgusting affairs relative to the theatre, made the additional manager heartily sick of his situation. The first demand was resisted, and the threat waved.

On the 26th, the theatre in John Street was opened with *The Wonder* and *Poor Soldier*. The new theatre (or Park) was in progress. A tragedy, called *The Mysterious Monk*, was preparing, written by the author of *The Father of an Only Child*. A serious drama, accepted from John B. Linn, called *Bourville Castle, or the Gallic Orphan*; and an opera, called *Edwin and Angelina, or the Bandit*, by Doctor Elihu Hubbard Smith, were in rehearsal. A farce was likewise nearly ready, written by the author of the tragedy, called *Tell Truth and Shame the Devil*. To these American productions must be added another play, by an English author, *The Comet*, by Mr. Milns, an intimate of Mr. Hodgkinson's.

The Mysterious Monk, the third tragedy written by the author of *The Father of an Only Child*, was performed with success on the last day of October.

The plot of this play turns on the revenge a vassal, or villain, takes for blows and injuries inflicted upon him by his feudal lord, whose princely soul, according to the creed of those days, had nothing in common with mere men. The degraded vassal contrives to destroy his lord's peace, makes him jealous of his wife, the murderer, as he supposes, of his friend, and of the mother of his only son. The friend, however, recovers from the

wounds he had received, and, in the disguise of a monk, saves the wife from her husband's jealousy, ultimately restoring all to peace and happiness. But, while he is working for the salvation of his friend, the baron communicates the story of guilt to his son, and the vassal, having secured, as he supposes, his own safety, writes a letter disclosing to the baron the innocence of his wife, and the means he had used for his revenge. The son follows the author of his parent's misery and kills him, but is condemned to die for murder. All, however, is rectified by the mysterious monk. The play is not skilfully managed; but there are passages deserving preservation. The young lord speaks thus to the monk :

Remember that thou speakest to thy master ;
Be fair and open—leave thy wonted arts,
Or thou may'st raise a storm to blast thee, monk.

MANUEL.

Irreverend boy ! I was mistaken in thee.
Rash and unthinking, dost thou mean by threats
To win the confidence of one like me ?
I am a Christian, boy ! and own no master,
Save one alone—Oh, how unlike to thee !

The son says, speaking of his father,

Honour is his idol.

MANUEL.

What is this boasted honour ?
This prince's, soldier's, ruffian's, robber's honour ?
Oft-times, at honour's call, the haughty lord

Arms 'gainst his neighbour chief his vassal train,
 And leads them on to massacre and carnage.
 Then flames the peasant's cot. The midnight shrieks
 Of infants slaughtered, virgins violated,
 Rise on the wo-fraught cloud to Heaven for vengeance !
 And gratify the ear of princely honour !

Manuel, speaking to the baron—

The work was all thine own : accuse not Heaven.
 Even now the self-same demons rend thy soul
 Which led thee on to murder innocence :
Thy passions.

RIBBEMONT.

Doth it not seem that Heaven denies its grace
 Where most it gifts vain man with worldly glory ?

MANUEL.

The snow, which as a fleecy mantle falls,
 Covering the tender plant, its seeds preserving,
 Is spread alike on hill and lowly vale ;
 So falls the soul-preserving grace of God
 In equal portions on the rich and poor.
 But as the wind drifteth the wholesome snow,
 Uncovering the lofty hill's proud summit,
 And doubly blanketing the lowly vale,
 So do the furious blasts of lawless passion
 Sweep from the haughty head Heaven's balmy grace,
 And doubly gift the humble.

But a brick, as has been said, or even two or three bricks, give no idea of a house.

It may be remarked that the fable of this play can be traced in Tobin's posthumous drama of *The Curfew*, written many years after. The principal parts were correctly played by Hodgkinson, Martin, Tyler, and Mrs. Melmoth. The characters

and incidents were not in sufficient number, and the piece, though published under the title of *Ribbemont, or the Feudal Baron*, is long since forgotten.

On the 19th of October, Mr. Wignell arrived at New-York from England, with the very important reinforcement to his company of Mrs. Merry (late Miss Brunton), Mr. Cooper, then a youth of twenty, Mr. Warren, Mr. and Mrs. Byrne, and Mr. and Mrs. Lestrangle.

In the evening of the 20th, while Cumberland's comedy of *First Love* was performing, Wignell renewed his cordial acquaintance with the author of *Darby's Return*, now one of the New-York managers, and told him that he had a message for him from Holcroft, the author of *The Road to Ruin*, and many other popular works, and an apology for not writing. A correspondence had previously commenced. Godwin being mentioned, Wignell said, "I have with me a young man, educated from infancy with Mr. Godwin, of the name of Cooper." The manager sought and found Mr. Cooper in the green-room, and seating himself beside him, told him that Wignell had said he was intimate with Mr. Godwin. "As much so as any man," he replied: "I have lived with him from infancy; I am his son, not in the course of nature, but much more than a common father is he to me; he has cherished and instructed me." He then mentioned several particulars respecting the amiable William Godwin and his friend Thomas

Holcroft. Such was the first interview between Mr. Cooper and one who for years was connected with him in theatrical affairs and by reciprocal acts of friendship.

Hallam and Wignell at this time met and were apparently reconciled.

On the 2d of November happened one of those riots which tend to throw obloquy on the theatre unjustly. Two sea captains, doubtless intoxicated, being in one of the stage boxes, called during an overture for Yankee Doodle. The audience hissed them ; they threw missiles in the orchestra, and defied the audience, some of whom pressed on the stage and attacked the rioters in conjunction with the peace-officers ; one of the latter was injured by a blow from a club. The rioters were dragged from their box, one turned into the street, and the other carried into a dressing-room. These madmen afterwards, with a number of sailors, attacked the doors of the theatre, and were only secured by the city watch. The principal in this transaction, Hayley, afterwards ran away with a ship of Mr. Isaac Clason's, and carried her into a French port.

On the 19th of December, 1796, *Edwin and Angelina, or the Bandit*, was performed for the first time. This only dramatic production from the pen of Dr. Elihu Hubbard Smith was, like himself, pure and energetic. But it was not sufficiently dramatic, and the characters of Edwin and Angelina were too familiar to all readers. He wrote many

sonnets and essays, but published little except on subjects connected with his profession. The drama of *Edwin and Angelina* was printed, with a dedication to the author's parents, Reuben and Abigail Smith.

This amiable and highly gifted man was born at Litchfield, in Connecticut, in the year 1771. He was fitted for entering Yale College at so early an age, and graduated while so young, that his father, Doctor Reuben Smith of Litchfield, very judiciously placed him, although he had passed through College honourably, for further tuition under the care of Doctor Dwight, at Greenfield. He received his first medical education under his worthy father, and the accomplishment of it under the professors of Philadelphia. There he became the friend of Charles Brockden Brown, whom he introduced to the knowledge and friendship of the writer. Doctor E. H. Smith practised his profession in New-York, and there, with Doctors Edward Miller and Samuel Latham Mitchill, established the work entitled "The Medical Repository." These men, with the others above mentioned, formed the before-mentioned band of literary pioneers. Of these the three last named were all distinguished as writers and physicians; another, Noah Webster, as a philologist and lexicographer; James Kent and William Johnson as jurists: Richard Alsop as a poet; and Samuel Miller as a theologian. To such men were the

dramas of the American manager read and submitted.

Doctor Elihu Hubbard Smith fell a victim to yellow fever in September, 1798. This was one of those returns of devastating pestilence which destroyed the hopes of fortune and usefulness which his friend the manager had entertained, and robbed that friend of one dearer to him than any earthly wealth. Elihu H. Smith feared no danger in the exercise of his professional duties, or of his duty as a man. He relied, likewise, upon his habitual temperance, perhaps carried to excess. He continued amidst the dead and dying, firmly and cheerfully exposing himself to infection. Finally, a young and amiable foreigner, an Italian, arrived from Philadelphia, where the plague likewise raged. He was seized with the symptoms before he reached New-York. Smith and his friend Johnson had him removed to their house before mentioned, in Pine Street, that he might have every aid humanity could render. He died. His nurse and physician sickened, and when he saw the last black symptoms of dissolution in his own case, calmly remarked, "decomposition," and expired. Thus the young, the temperate, the virtuous, the benevolent, sank under the hoofs of the pale horse, and pierced by his rider's darts—but they had enjoyed life and the happiness flowing from conscious rectitude, and they died doing their duty, and calmly bowing to the will of their God.

On the 9th of January, 1797, was first performed a piece in two acts, written by the American manager, called *Tell Truth and Shame the Devil*. It was an alteration from a French one-act piece, called *Jerome Pointu*. So little of the French *proverbe* was retained, that it may be considered as original. It was played a few times and forgotten. It was printed by Longworth, and was, (as altered to suit the place and people) played at Covent Garden on the 18th of May, 1799.

Seven days after *Tell Truth and Shame the Devil*, *Bourville Castle* made its appearance, written by John Blair Linn. This young man was the son of Doctor Linn, of the Presbyterian Church, had graduated at Columbia College, New-York, and was at the time studying law with Alexander Hamilton. One of the most remarkable circumstances attending *Bourville Castle* is, that Charles Brockden Brown, and the American manager, whose guest he was, corrected the manuscript and wrote out the parts for the performers. Mr. Linn studied divinity, and was for some years pastor of a church in Philadelphia, much esteemed as a preacher, and beloved as a man. After his death, Brown published an elegant biographical eulogium on him.

On the 1st of February, *The Comet*, a comedy by Mr. Milns, was performed. It was soon afterwards cut down to a farce, which it had been originally, when it was acted in London for John Bannister's benefit.

It appears that, although the American manager had been empowered to cast all plays, that is, to appropriate parts, this source of discord, even between Hallam and Hodgkinson, was not removed. Hallam gave up most that Hodgkinson wished, but he wished all. Hallam had played Goldfinch in *The Road to Ruin*, and Hodgkinson Harry Dornton. On occasion of preparing the play for performance, the latter told the manager that Hallam was unfit for Goldfinch, and he must have it, or he would not play in the piece. The manager made a proper stand, and told him he must play Harry Dornton, as it was the part he had played by choice, and his name should be put in the bill. The consequence was, that he went so far as to consult the illustrious Hamilton respecting the force of the articles he had signed, and, swayed by his legal advice, submitted to play this very fine part rather than forfeit his bond. It had been agreed that no money should be expended, or salaries granted, without consent of the three concerned; Hallam, as being proprietor of half, to have a voice equal to the other two. The salaries of the three were fixed. But a proposal was soon made to obtain higher salaries for Hodgkinson and wife, accompanied by threats of leaving the company, or ceasing to play. The irritation between Hallam and Hodgkinson was incessant, and the determination of Hallam to bring his wife on the stage again, in which he found supporters, made the internal business of the theatre

a constant source of vexations. Instead of the promised assistance in the management, every obstacle was increased, and every error exulted over, by both the contending parties.

The frequent applications of would-be authors and actors is a source of trouble to all managers. Sometimes the applications are vexatious, sometimes ludicrous.

"Are you the gentleman who takes in play-actors?" asked a youth of seventeen or eighteen, slender, awkward, neatly dressed in a short blue jacket, striped waistcoat, pantaloons of nankeen, and half-boots. The reply was, "I have the direction of the theatre."

"Do you want any actors?"

"Any person of extraordinary talents would find employment. Do you know of any one wanting to engage as an actor?"

"I want to go on the stage myself."

"You! Did you ever attempt to go on the stage!"

"Only at the Academy."

"You are an American?"

"Yes."

"Where were you educated?"

"At Goshen."

"What plays did you perform in at the Academy?"

"Why, we played the Catos, and Tamerlanes, and such."

"And what did you play?"

“ I played Cato and Bajazet—and in *The Bold Stroke for a Wife*, I played the Colonel. I was the biggest boy, and so I played the biggest parts.”

Sometimes a young Scotchman would present himself for Douglas, because “ *Hairy Johnson* was successful in London ;” or an Irishman, realizing Murphy’s Othello in *The Apprentice*.

On the 5th of December, 1796, Wignell, having returned to Philadelphia with his powerful reinforcement, opened his theatre with *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet, Mrs. Merry, perhaps the best representative of Juliet that was ever seen or heard. On the 7th, the ballet dancers, Mr. and Mrs. Byrne, were brought out ; and, on the Friday following, the 9th, Mr. Cooper made his first appearance in America, playing Macbeth.

CHAPTER XIV.

Letter from T. Holcroft — New Theatre, Park — Boston Theatres — John B. Williamson — Bunker's Hill, a Tragedy — John Burk — The Hallam Riot — Hodgkinson hissed off the Stage — Hallam breaks into Jail — The Author's visit to Philadelphia, May, 1797 — Convention from the Abolition Societies — Doctors Barton, Rush, Griffiths — Bartram the Botanist — Uriah Tracy — Oliver Wolcot — Joseph Bringhurst — Wm. Cobbett — "The Ancient Day" Natural History — Man of Fortitude — Boston and Charleston Theatres — Names of Performers known at this time in the United States (1797) — Wignell and Reinagle, and the Philadelphia Company in Greenwich Street, New-York.

THE writer, having sent some manuscripts to Mr. Holcroft, with whom he had exchanged letters before, received the following from him; which, as it gives the opinions of a veteran dramatist on the play of *The Archers*, or *William Tell* recently acted, and on other subjects connected with this work, we will insert.

TO MR. DUNLAP.

Dear Sir,

I received your last letters dated May and October; as I had done others some months ago, in which you wished me to read your manuscripts. Your friend, Mr. Brewer, offered to put these manuscripts into my hands; this I declined, and I will state my motives.

The reading of manuscripts I have found to be attended with danger. I once read two acts of a manuscript play, and was afterwards accused of having purloined one of the characters. The accusation had some semblance of truth; latent ideas floated in my mind, and there were two or three traits in the character drawn by me similar to the one I had read; though I was very unconscious of this when I wrote the character.

A still more potent reason is the improbability of good that is to result from reading manuscripts. To read carefully, examine conscientiously, and detail with perspicuity the errors which the judgment of a critic might think deserving of amendment, is a laborious task : it devours time and fatigues the mind, and but seldom to any good purpose. Books of criticism abound, and may be consulted by an author who is anxious to improve. I grant that the critical remarks of a friend may be of great service. If a man have attained that elegance of diction, depth of penetration, and strength of feeling which constitute genius, to criticise his works before they are presented to the public may be a useful and a dignified task. Men acquire these high qualities gradually, when compelled by that restless desire which is incessant in its endeavours after excellence ; and for these gradations the books already written are, in my opinion, sufficient. Your friend gave me *William Tell* to read : it proves you have made some progress ; but it likewise proves, as far as I am a judge, that much remains for you to accomplish. Common thoughts, common characters, and common sensations, have little attraction : we must soar beyond them, or be contented to walk the earth and join the crowd. Far be it from me to discourage those efforts of mind in which I delight : but far be it from me to deceive. If you would attain the high gifts after which you so virtuously aspire, your perseverance must be energetic and unremitting. I consider America as unfavourable to genius : not from any qualities of air, earth, or water : but because the efforts of mind are neither so great, so numerous, or so urgent, as in England or France.

You wish for an independence. That man is independent whose mind is prepared to meet all fortunes, and be happy under the worst ; who is conscious that industry in any country will supply the very few real wants of his species ; and who, while he can enjoy the delicacies of taste as exquisitely as a glutton, can transfer that luxury by the activity of his mind and body to the simplest viands. Every other man is a slave, though he were more wealthy than Midas.

I send you my narrative, but am surprised that there should be any difficulty in procuring it at New-York. To a bookseller, the conveyance of such things is familiar and easy ; to an individual it has the inconvenience of calling his attention to trifles, and disturbing his ordinary progress. I am not certain that the man of literature is not benefitted by these little jolts that awaken him, or rather endeavour to awaken : but I know from experience he is very unwilling to notice them, they therefore easily slip his memory. This is the reason that I did not send it before as you desired.

With respect to the stage, it is a question which cannot be effectually discussed in a letter : but I have no doubt whatever of its high moral tendency. Neither, in my opinion, was Rousseau right relative to Geneva : for that which is in itself essentially good, will, as I suppose, be good at all times and in all places.

T. HOLCROFT.

London, Newman Street, }
December 10th, 1796. }

Here was no flattery to the young author, but much excellent advice. He probably flattered himself that if the stern critic had read the manuscript instead of the printed play, he might have found something more than "common thoughts, common characters, and common sensations ;" and yet it would probably have been merely self-flattery. The remark respecting America, as being "unfavourable to genius," was at that time perfectly true : but the efforts of mind are now, and must be henceforward, greater, more numerous, and more urgent, than heretofore. The remark only applies to literature and the fine arts. It is applicable to a time past. The men of the present day have advantages which their predecessors had not.

At this time, January 1797, the managers were negotiating with the proprietors of the new theatre, Park, for that building, and Hodgkinson was anxious to go to England to procure wardrobe and performers. This was discouraged by the American partner, who now knew the man and his motives too well. Hallam was decidedly opposed to the scheme. In February, every engine



that Hallam could move was put in operation to force a consent to the return of Mrs. Hallam to the stage.

Mr. John B. Williamson, before mentioned as remembered when playing at the Haymarket theatre, London, in 1785-6, was now manager of the Federal Street theatre, Boston, and wished to take the Hartford theatre for one season. A portion of his letter to Hodgkinson is characteristic: "You wish to be informed 'how we go on;'" I scarcely need to point out what your own judgment and experience here will suggest. *We* have the opinion hollow as to the merits of the company, and the patronage of the '*better sort.*' But the rage for *novelty* in Boston, and prevailing Jacobin spirit in the lower ranks, are our strongest opponents. Two theatres cannot be supported—an additional public could not be created with an additional theatre. Could the *joint* receipts of *both houses* be fairly averaged, I will venture to assert they would not exceed *five hundred and fifty* dollars, while we are expending upwards of *twelve hundred* nightly, to take—'a plague upon both the houses'—the deficiency must fall *somewhere*. However we *pay* punctually—it is in proof that our opponents *do not*. They have brought out a new piece, called *Bunker's Hill*, a tragedy, the most execrable of the Grub Street kind—but from its locality in title, the burning of Charlestown and *peppering* the *British* (which are superadded to the tragedy in pantomime), to the utter disgrace

of Boston theatricals, has brought them *full houses*."

This deplorable *Bunker's Hill* was offered to the New-York stage, by the author, for one hundred guineas. He published it, and we are sorry to say it was afterwards played in New-York. The author's letter accompanying the play is too great a curiosity to be suppressed. Mr. Burk's History of Virginia proves that it was not want of talent or learning that occasioned this odd production.

To J. Hodgkinson, Esq.

Dear Sir,

From a wish that you should be possessed of my play as early as possible, I have preferred sending on the original copy rather than wait to have a fair one transcribed—where it was incomplete I have written and made it good, interspersing occasionally such remarks as, from seeing the effect in representation, appeared to me serviceable in getting it up. It was played seven nights successively, and on the last night was received with the same enthusiasm as on the first—it revived old scenes, and united all parts of the house. Mr. Powell intends it for a stock play, and it will be represented on all festivals—such as 4th July, 19th June, &c. It will be played here in a few nights again, immediately after *Columbus*. The lines marked by inverted commas are those spoken. [The hill is raised gradually by boards extended from the stage to a bench. Three men should walk abreast on it, and the side where the English march up should for the most part be turned towards the wings; on our hill there was room for eighteen or twenty men, and they were concealed by a board painted mud colour, and having two cannon painted on it—which board was three feet and a half high. The English marched in two divisions from one extremity of the stage, where they ranged, after coming from the wings, when they come to the foot of the hill. The Americans fire—the English fire—six or seven of your men should be taught to fall—the fire should be frequent for some minutes. The English retire to the front of the stage—second line of English advance from the wing near the hill—firing

commences—they are again beaten back—windows on the stage should be open to let out the smoke. All the English make the attack and mount the hill. After a brisk fire, the Americans leave works and meet them. Here is room for effect, if the scuffle be nicely managed. Sometimes the English falling back, sometimes the Americans—two or three Englishmen rolling down the hill. A square piece about nine feet high and five wide, having some houses and a meeting-house painted on fire, with flame and smoke issuing from it, should be raised two feet distance from the horizon scene at the back of your stage, the windows and doors cut out for transparencies—in a word, it should have the appearance of a town on fire. We had painted smoke suspended—it is raised at the back wing, and is intended to represent Charlestown, and is on a line with the hill, and where it is lowest. The fire should be played skilfully [this puts one in mind of Bottom playing Moonshine] behind this burning town, and the smoke to evaporate. When the curtain rises in the fifth, the appearance of the whole is good—Charlestown on fire, the breastwork of wood, the Americans appearing over the works and the muzzles of their guns, the English and the American music, the attack of the hill, the falling of the English troops, Warren's half descending the hill and animating the Americans, the smoke and confusion, all together produce an effect scarce credible. We had a scene of State Street—if you had one it would not be amiss—we used it instead of the scene of Boston Neck—it appears to me you need not be particular, but the hill and Charlestown on fire. We had English uniforms for men and officers. You can procure the coats of some company at New-York which dresses in red. [Small cannon should be fired during the battle, which continued with us for twelve or fifteen minutes.] I am thus prolix that you may find the less difficulty in getting it up—it is not expensive, and will always be a valuable stock piece. I should not wonder if every person in New-York, and some miles round it, should go to see it represented. There will no doubt be some who will call in question your prudence in getting up this piece, as being not in favour of England. Those are blockheads, and know not the public opinion in America. Boston is as much divided as New-York—party was forgotten in the representation of it. Others there are who will endeavour to prejudice you against its merit; of them I shall say nothing. You have the play and can judge for yourself—my reason for mentioning the latter description of men is, that a man from Boston, who pretends to criticise without knowing how to

spell, has been industrious in depreciating the value of my piece in Boston, and I conceived it not improbable that he would act in the same manner in New-York. When he found it had succeeded, he ascribed its success alone to its locality. This man took a letter to you from Mr. Barrett. I send you the prologue and elegy.

After consulting Mr. Barrett, who was delicate in advising, lest he should be thought partial to one interest or the other, I have concluded to charge you one hundred guineas for the copy, seventy of which I request you will send to Mr. Barrett immediately on receipt of the piece, the remaining thirty on the fourth night of representation. Mr. Barrett thinks it will run ten nights in succession at New-York. I think not of printing it for one year, when I do I shall dedicate it to the President. Mr. Bates has sent on to me for a copy. I am in treaty with Mr. Wignell. The terms shall not be lower than with you. I shall send you on from time to time such pantomimes and entertainments as I shall arrange, on reasonable terms. I have three at present, which I shall send on when you please, as cheap as you can get a pirated copy of a farce. My new tragedy entitled *Joan of Arc, or the Maid of Orleans*, is ready for representation. Excuse this wretched scrawl, it has been written too hastily.

JOHN BURK.

We had our hill on the left side of the stage—the painting of Charlestown on fire should not be seen till the fifth act. If there is any thing you would wish to be informed on further, by directing a line to me, you shall receive the speediest answer. As I look on this only as the *basis* of a future negociation, I shall not be averse to abate something of my demand, if you think it high, though I am tolerably certain you will clear four thousand dollars in its run only.

This is literal and faithful. He cleared by it 2000 dollars in Boston. Hodgkinson sent the piece back immediately, but it was returned with a letter offering it on the usual terms given by him for new pieces.

The elegy mentioned in the letter begins,

He died for his country — rain our tears.

And the first stanza concludes thus :—

His sacred blood was shed for you,
Oh let us shed our tears in lieu.

The author styles himself, “late of Trinity College, Dublin.” He says, “never less than 2500 persons attended, sometimes 3000 ; our pit and boxes were as good the last night as the first.” Again, “this act kept the audience in one incessant roar of applause, from beginning to end,” “and “the fifth act was received with still greater enthusiasm than the fourth.”

After some attempts to induce Mr. Hallam to sell out altogether, which failed, the American manager relinquished his salary to Hodgkinson, who agreed to become the acting manager. It was further agreed that the former articles should be made void after the present season, the one quitting theatrical management, the other leaving the old American Company and New-York. Happy would it have been if *so* it had been !

The re-engagement of Mrs. Hallam being refused, notwithstanding threats and hints of combinations to create riots and coerce the managers, her husband gave it out that she should play for his benefit. The following regulations were put up in the green-room.

Regulations for the old American Company, at the ensuing Benefits.

March 24th, 1797.

The nights on which benefit plays will be performed, to be thrown for in two classes, as on the last season.

Any performer giving notice, after this date, to the acting manager, for the time being, of his or her wish to get up any new piece, on his or her night, will obtain by such notice a prior right to such new piece.

No piece shall be performed in any other manner than as cast by the acting manager for the time being, that cast to be obtained previous to advertising the piece.

No bill to be published until submitted to the correction of the acting manager for the time being, and one of the other proprietors.

No performer can be required to study more than four lengths, from play night to play night, and in the same proportion for a longer time.

The evening after this notice was put up, Hodgkinson, on playing Puff, in *The Critic*, mentioned himself as is usual, it being intended by the author that the actor should do so; but, on this occasion, there was a long and audible hiss among the plaudits; he then added "To be sure I am goosed, but that's of little consequence; it is not the first time this season that some envious scoundrel has insulted me," and then went on with the part apparently at ease.

On the 27th, Hallam informed Hodgkinson that he would not agree to the regulations which had been put up in the green-room, and had torn them down. James Kent and William Johnson, Esqrs. were consulted upon the articles of agreement, and gave their opinion that a suit might be commenced for the breach of them, but advised that no steps of the kind should be then taken, unless they would write to him.

On the evening of the 29th, the Hallams had concerted an appeal to the public from the stage,

and had planned their measures with such secrecy that Hodgkinson, then the acting manager, had no intimation of them. He had been told that Mrs. Hallam was behind the scenes, but that was all. He was to play Colin M'Cleod, in *The Fashionable Lover*, and had come on the stage from the left side to begin the comedy, when he was saluted by hisses and the cry of "Off! off!" He stood astounded, and the noise and hissing continued undiminished. Mrs. Hallam entered from the right, dressed in black silk, her hair parted on the top of her head, combed down on each side of her face, and powdered. She looked beauty in distress. She held a paper in her hands, and courtesied most profoundly. The plaudits which saluted her entrance caused Hodgkinson to look over his shoulder, and he then first perceived that she was not only in the house, but on the stage. There was a momentary silence, when a person in the pit cried out "Insolence!" on which a man sprung up, likewise in the pit, and brandishing a cudgel, with which many appeared to be armed, cried, "Out with the rascal!" which was repeated by others, until it was superseded by another cry of "Hear Mrs. Hallam!" And now Hallam was seen, dressed in black, stalking down the centre of the stage, and advancing with many bows to the audience. A messenger was despatched to give notice to the magistrates that a riot had commenced at the theatre. Hallam addressed the audience, and asked permission

for Mrs. Hallam to read the paper she held in her hand. Mrs. Hallam then read a statement of injuries received in being deprived of the means of earning her bread, asserted that she never intentionally offended that audience, and expressed her eternal gratitude to those who now supported her. She then retired amid plaudits. Hallam and Hodgkinson remained on the stage, the one in stately black, the other in the Highland Colin's dress. They both addressed the audience, but Hodgkinson was constantly interrupted by hisses; he however succeeded in stating that the offer to withdraw Mrs. Hallam from the stage was the basis of the present copartnership, and had been made by Mr. Hallam. This Hallam denied. The other appealed to Mr. Philip Ten Eyck, as the person bringing the offer from Hallam. This was affirmed by Mr. Ten Eyck, who was present, and pledged himself to state the affair in the papers. Hodgkinson now obtained a hearing, and appealed to the audience eloquently. He represented the injustice of attacking a player when on the stage and defenceless, by a combination of numbers determined to prejudice and insult him. "If I have offended any one, I am known and to be found, but I know not the persons or the names of those who insult me." Some one cried out, "We are not ashamed of our names." "Give me your name, sir;—you who last spoke." But the champion drew back and sheltered himself in the crowd.

Hodgkinson made use of the word riot. This called forth vehement marks of disapprobation.

John Cozine, Esq., afterwards Judge Cozine, got up in a side box not far from the stage, and addressed the rioters. They hissed. He proceeded, "You are guilty of a riot, and liable to all the consequent damage that may ensue. You have no right to demand any thing or person at the theatre, or on the stage, not advertised expressly in the bill. If Mr. Hallam is aggrieved, he has his remedy in a court of justice. You are rioters; you will know to-morrow that the grand jury are sitting." Another gentleman got up in a side box, and told Hodgkinson that he degraded his profession by speaking to men who had entered into a conspiracy to injure him, and would only hear his adversaries. The tide was turning, and Hallam requested that the play might commence, saying he would withdraw Mrs. Hallam. Some one said, "It is very hard that the public are not to be indulged with a favourite actress." Hodgkinson promptly replied, "You are not the public, sir." He was asked if he would not permit Mrs. Hallam to play. He answered, "Never, while I have any thing to do with the theatre." He said he would appeal to the public and the laws of the country. He was now generally applauded, and the rioters put down. The mayor and other magistrates were by this time in the house. There was a general call for the play. Hodgkinson said he could not pro-

ceed after what had passed, but was soon persuaded, and commenced with the first line of Colin M'Cleod, "Hoot awa," &c., amidst a shout of applause; and uninterrupted plaudits continued throughout the evening's entertainment.

On the 30th March, Mr. Philip Ten Eyck made a statement of facts respecting Hallam's withdrawing Mrs. Hallam from the stage, which statement was given for publication to the Daily Advertiser and Patriotic Register.

On the next play night Hodgkinson was hissed, until he finally took his leave, went home, and the audience retired. He now declined appearing as actor or manager, and with difficulty the performers' benefits were arranged, and in a slovenly manner carried through.

It was necessary to commence suits against Hallam; but Hodgkinson, justly fearful that an improper impression on the public might be made thereby, gave instructions that Mr. Hallam's person should not be molested; such an opportunity however, was not to be missed, and he would go to jail in spite of the sheriff. Hodgkinson wrote to the deputy sheriff thus: "Sir, the impression has gone forth among a number of citizens that Mr. Hallam is in confinement at my instance. I will thank you to say in return what my request was to you respecting the suit for damages between Mr. Hallam and me, and how, after the conversation that passed this morning, he is sur-

rendered at all, or whether he is not permitted to leave custody if he pleases." The answer was :

April 18th, 1797.

Sir,

I waited upon Mr. Hallam yesterday before I had seen you upon the business of the writ, and, agreeable to the nature of the precept, asked him to endorse his appearance. After a few minutes' consideration he declined, and said he would go to jail. I remonstrated against his resolution, and begged him not to let the impulse of the moment lead him to put it in execution. He promised to wait upon me this morning at nine o'clock, and conclusively determine what to do. He came and said he had made up his mind to remain in custody. I begged him to think better of it—that I desired no endorsement from him, and he was at liberty to go when he pleased. He would content himself with nothing short of actual confinement, and though I told him the turnkeys should have orders to let him out whenever he called upon them, he was determined not to be liberated. I am sorry the contest between you has taken so serious an aspect ; I certainly have a high esteem for Mr. Hallam, and would go great lengths to serve him, yet I must do you the justice to declare, when I waited upon you at your request this morning, you told me you was heartily willing he should be left at his word, and wished no difficulty to arise that might savour of coercion. But having supposed a breach of covenant had taken place on the part of Mr. Hallam, you found no other way left you but the step which you had taken, and trusted I would do every thing in my power to convince him he was free from constraint.

(Signed,) ARONDT VAN HOOK.

Thus Mr. Hallam broke into jail, and the jailer, after begging him not to do so, asked the lawyer who issued the writ for advice, who, laughing, told him, "Turn him out of doors, unless you keep him as a companion." After playing this farce some hours, Hallam walked home again and then played sick, or was sick from disappointment and vexation.

During the benefits, Mrs. Hallam again appeared before the public as Lady Teazle, on the night appropriated to her husband's son. Hodgkinson had been driven from the stage. The writer had only continued in the direction to prevent total loss ; and, on the 2d of May, 1797, went to Philadelphia as a deputy to the Convention there meeting, from the Abolition Societies of the several States. The deputies from New-York, among others, were Doctor Elihu H. Smith, Doctor Samuel L. Mitchill, and Lawrence Embree, the same whose conscience refused 100 dollars for the poor, because it came from the manager of a play-house. Uriah Tracy, of Connecticut, represented the Abolition Society of Connecticut in Convention, as well the good people of the state in Congress.

To relieve the monotony of a work on one subject, we will extract, from a diary kept at the time, some notices of men and events of that day, which may not prove uninteresting. Charles Brockden Brown was now at home in his father's house in Philadelphia. E. H. Smith had preceded the writer.

Went by appointment and drank tea with Charles. He shewed me a letter from Joseph Bringhurst, in which he gives his reason for being a Christian ; the letter is highly pleasing and lovely. We walk in the state-house yard, and thence into the library. Here I read with much pleasure a translation of Leonora. The bewildered

dream of a heart-broken girl, ending in death, is finely imagined and executed. We leave the library to see the circus and exhibitions of a French equestrian (Lailson). Smith joins and goes with us. The *coup d'œil* of the house, lights, and company, were pleasing, but a pleasure fleeting in the extreme. Compare the pleasures of yesterday (a day the writer had passed in the place of his nativity, Perth Amboy), rambling over meadows and clover fields, amid orchards whose blossoms filled the air with fragrance, while birds of every kind warbled or whistled their expressions of happiness. To-day encircled in a huge enclosure, from which the light and air of heaven is excluded, surrounded by beings like myself, pretending to rationality, yet sitting hour after hour to see men and women, in fools' coats, display the gambols of the monkey as the highest attainment of their persevering industry. We did not stay the show over. I found Tracy at home, and passed an agreeable hour with him.

May 3rd. Smith and self call on Brown. Bringhurst came hither from Wilmington yesterday ; we cannot yet find him. Go to the theatre, but do not find Wignell. We called on Mr. John Leib, who read us a dissection of Peter Porcupine, by his brother Doctor Leib. We call to see Leffert: Volney is not in town, so we are disappointed in our expected introduction to him. We went to Cobbett's book-store. He is a stout, well-looking man, plain and manly, speaks well, but has an aspect of

ill temper. Bought Adams' Defence, in 3 octavo vols., just published by Cobbett from the last London edition. We now find Bringhurst at Brown's, and pass a very pleasant hour with him. Evening, Bringhurst and Brown called on us, and staid until the hour appointed for the meeting of the Convention. Doctor Rush I had met in the course of the day ; we now met him again, and Doctor Griffith, General Bloomfield, and others of my acquaintance. On returning home, Tracy, who had been at the theatre, gave us an account of a new drama in three acts, called *The Ancient Day*, by a citizen of Philadelphia, which he says is execrable.

May 4th. Go with Tracy and Smith to the "United States" frigate, now nearly ready for launching. Met Wignell and Reinagle, who took me to the theatre. I saw Cooper, who apologized for not writing to me. He says he has not written to Holcroft. Wignell left me, and I soon left the theatre, which looks quite small after seeing Lailson's circus. Declined an invitation to dine with Wignell on Saturday. Dine at Brown's, with Smith and Bringhurst. Afternoon, met Oliver Wolcott, who walked with my hand locked in his nearly the length of a square ; he reproached me with not calling on him, and took my address. He asked me for news. I told him I had just read a letter attributed to Mr. Jefferson, which was very surprising to me. He said it was not so to him, that it corresponded with his manner of talking. I promised to call on him, and went to my lodgings,

where he came with the attorney-general, and invited Tracy, Smith, and self, to dine with him.

May 6th. Attend to the laws respecting slavery, in consequence of a nomination as chairman of committee for that purpose. Tracy, Smith, Mitchill, and self, dined with Secretary Wolcott, and passed an agreeable afternoon. He gave us some wine sent by Joel Barlow to him from Algiers, made from grapes the growth of that soil, and manufactured by the hands of the poet and ambassador. Evening, theatre—*The Way to get Married*. Pleased with Morton's Tangent. It was easy and elegant, nothing overstrained. Cooper exceeded my expectations in Faulkner. Mrs. Merry was certainly every thing that an actress could be in Julia. Her voice charming; her person far exceeding my expectation, from having seen her in a riding habit at New-York, but I am not quite satisfied with her countenance, and see or imagine some defect in her eyes.

May 7th. Smith, Mitchill, and self, breakfast with Doctor Benjamin Smith Barton. Here I had a feast of physical science. He shewed us a number of drawings in natural history, executed by himself, with eminent accuracy and taste, among which were two species of jerboa, lately discovered by himself. He has promised me a list of such plants of our country as have not been yet drawn, or have only imperfect drawings or engravings made of them. He shewed us, in a small box, curiously preserved, a number of grasshoppers,

each of which was transfixed with a thorn, and gave us the following history of them. "A gentleman, going into a young apple orchard, was surprised to see the trees hung with grasshoppers thus transfixed on the thorny branches. The farmer laughed at his surprise, and told him that the birds did it. For what purpose, or what birds, the farmer never inquired. This was late in the autumn. The gentleman's curiosity was strongly awakened; he collected specimens of the insect, and watched for the birds. The result of his observations in this and the succeeding year was, that the "great ash-coloured butcher-bird, or 'shrike,' a specimen of which Doctor Barton produced (taken in the act), is the bird that dresses out such curious shambles; not only to serve as provision after the insect tribes have run their little race of life, but as a bate whereby to catch the small birds who remain late in the autumn, or winter, among us. The bird-catcher having baited the thorns, sits ready until a bird is attracted by the bait, then pounces on and secures his victim."

May 8th. Dine with James Todd, who had other members of the Convention with him. Go to Convention at 3. Mr. Patterson asserted that what was morally right could not be politically wrong, applying it to the sudden and total abolition of slavery, as it respects the Southern states, and the acts of the French convention, which liberated all their West India slaves. Doctor Rush got up and approved this, repeating with admira-

tion Condorcet's expression of "Perish our West India Islands rather than we should depart from the principles of justice!" This he gave as sublime, and said he did homage to it. Do these gentlemen consider that justice is due to the inhabitants of those countries where there are unhappily slaves, and to slave-holders as well as slaves? *Fiat Justitia* is in the mouths of many who do not consider that to liberate the slave does not restore him to his original condition, but probably devotes him and his holder to misery, and that many a slaveholder is innocently such—that, in short, justice is due to all God's creatures, as is every act of love; but this subject is better understood now, and Colonization Societies are superseding the Abolitionists, who are to be blessed for beginning the good work.

May 9th. Rise about 5 o'clock, and join Charles Brockden Brown about 6, for the purpose of walking to Bartram's Botanic Garden. We breakfasted at Gray's Garden's, and then continued our walk. Arrived at the Botanist's Garden, we approached an old man who, with a rake in his hand, was breaking the clods of earth in a tulip bed. His hat was old and flapped over his face, his coarse shirt was seen near his neck, as he wore no cravat or kerchief; his waistcoat and breeches were both of leather, and his shoes were tied with leather strings. We approached and accosted him. He ceased his work, and entered into conversation with the ease and politeness of nature's noblemen.

His countenance was expressive of benignity and happiness. This was the botanist, traveller, and philosopher, we had come to see. He had pointed out many curious plants. He said there was in New-Jersey a third species of azelea, somewhat like the viscosa; that at Passaic falls, his father, John Bartram, and himself, had found in a shady hollow, near the cascade, a species of geranium, and, in the neighbourhood, the larch-tree. He had heard of, but never seen, Wangenheim's book. Dine with Smith and Mitchill at Dr. Rush's. He mentions several cases of hydrophobia cured by copious bleeding.

We will return to New-York and the Drama.—During the month of May, negotiations were in progress respecting the new theatre, which were not concluded until some time afterwards, and the result shall be noticed in due time.

In the letter from T. Holcroft to W. Dunlap, we find the first-mentioned person noticing the accusation made against him of appropriating a portion of a manuscript left with him for reading to his own purposes in composition. Managers have been accused of such thefts time out of mind. But a most curious fact of that nature we will notice, as characteristic of the extraordinary individual who was one of the parties in the affair.

The person whom we have designated the American manager had written a piece in one act for the stage, and called it *The Knight's Adventure*. It was in blank verse. He left it with Mr. Hodg-

kinson, and it was almost forgotten, when Hodgkinson told him that he had written a play, and called it *The Man of Fortitude*. This was the whole of *The Knight's Adventure*, partly in prose, with the addition of a comic buffoon, and a lady. The author of the first piece remarked this to Hodgkinson, who did not deny it, but only said he had "altered every thing," and truly every thing was altered. "And you see I have added so and so." The other laughed and asked for his one act piece, but it was not forthcoming. *The Man of Fortitude* was read to companions at the dinner table, to the company in the green-room, and on the 7th of June, 1797, played for a benefit. We scarcely believe the author was conscious of wrong in the transaction, as far as injury to another was concerned. *The Knight's Adventure* was afterwards recovered.

At a benefit given at the Boston theatre, in the early part of March, 1797, the sum of 887 dollars was raised for the prisoners recently released from Algiers. As we have no occurrence to record belonging to this period, we will close this chapter with an extract from the *Minerva* of July 29th, 1797, and some other "notes of preparation."

"The citizens of Boston are assured, that, for five years to come, their amusements will not be disturbed by an opposition between the two theatres. A formal agreement has taken place between Mr. Hodgkinson, manager of the N. York company, and the proprietor of the City theatre,

Charleston, who have engaged the two theatres in town. The Haymarket will be reserved for summer exhibitions, the Federal Street for winter. The plan for the winter theatre is to have one company for Boston and one for Charleston, to be exchanged every season. The persons already fixed upon and partly engaged are :

In Boston, Mr. and Mrs. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, Mr. and Mrs. C. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. S. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Harper, Mr. and Mrs. Graupner, M. and Madame Lege, M. and Madame Gardie, Messrs. Villiers, Kenny, Dickinson, and J. Jones, Mrs. Allen, and Miss Harrison.

For Charleston, Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Cleaveland, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. Placide, Mr. and Mrs. Rowson, Messrs. Chalmers, Williamson (a singer), Downie, and M'Kenzie, Misses Broadhurst and Green."

When this catalogue of names is added to that which may be composed from the two companies at Philadelphia and New-York, we may form an estimate of the progress of the theatre, and in some measure of the country, since the year 1752.

In New-York were Mr. and Mrs. Hodgkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Hallam, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Tyler, Mr. and Mrs. Seymour, Mr. and Mrs. Munto, Messrs. Jefferson, Hallam, jun., Martin, Crosby, Fawcett, Prigmore, Miller, Lee, Wools, M'Grath, Durang, Mrs. Melmoth, Mrs. Brett, and Misses Brett and Hardinge.

And the Philadelphia company consisted of Messrs. Wignell, Fennell, Cooper, Moreton, Harwood, Marshall, Blissett, Francis, Hardinge, Fox, Warren, Warrell, Byrne, Green, and Lestrangle. Bernard joined after they opened in Greenwich Street, New-York. Mesdames Merry, Marshall, Oldmixon, Hardinge, Frances, Warrell, Lestrangle, and Misses Oldfield, Milbourne, &c. Such were the successors, in 1797, to the company sent from Goodman's Fields to Virginia in 1752, and playing for the first time in New-York in 1753.

On the 17th of August, the following notice appeared in the New-York newspapers: "The public are respectfully informed, the entertainments of the theatre, Greenwich Street, will commence on Monday, the twenty-first instant. Wignell and Reinagle." And on the 18th appeared this announcement: "The public are informed, that several principal performers of the Boston and Charleston theatres, on their way to Philadelphia, will perform, on Friday evening, a comedy called *The Wonder*, with the farce of *The Spoiled Child*."

CHAPTER XV.

Solee and Company open in John Street, August 18th, 1797—Mr. Whitlock—Wignell and Reinagle's Company in Greenwich Street—Mrs. Merry—Mr. Cooper—Mr. Bernard—Mr. Warren—Mr. Fox—Mr. and Mrs. Hardinge—Mr. and Mrs. Byrne—Mr. John Joseph Holland.

THE performers announced in the last chapter as of the Boston and Charleston theatres played in the John Street theatre, the New-York company being elsewhere. Mr. Solee, a French gentleman, was the manager. He was imperfectly acquainted with the English language, and utterly unacquainted with English literature, especially dramatic. The performers directed the business, which was very bad in every sense, though some excellent actors were employed in it. Mrs. Whitlock appeared in *Isabella*, and was thus announced: "Mrs. Whitlock, the sister of Mrs. Siddons, and the Siddons of America, is arrived, and will perform at the theatre in John Street the short time the company remains in this city." But the Siddons of America, as we shall see, was playing at the other house, the circus in Greenwich Street, fitted up as an elegant summer theatre.

We shall dwell at some length upon such performers attached to the company of Wignell and

Reinagle as have not already occupied our pages, and although the order in which we shall notice them is not intended to denote the rank which they hold in our estimation, yet we begin with the person who will long be entitled to the character of the most perfect actress America has seen—Mrs. Ann Merry.

This lady was born in the year 1770, and was the daughter of Mr. John Brunton. She made her debut at Bristol in the winter of 1785-6. Her father was manager of a provincial theatre, and a very respectable and truly worthy man. He was an actor, but, though a man of excellent good sense, was not a star in his profession.

Mr. Brunton married Miss Friend, of Bristol, he being then a grocer in that place. He afterwards established himself as a tea-dealer in London; but fondness for the stage and an acquaintance with Mr. Younge, of Covent Garden, induced him to try his success at his friend's benefit, which led finally to leaving trade and becoming professionally an actor. He was successful in the Norwich, Bath, and Bristol companies, and, becoming manager of the Norwich theatre, sustained an exemplary character, and reared a family of six children, three of whom have been distinguished for good acting off and on the stage, and have given celebrity to the name of Brunton.

Mr. Brunton commenced his theatrical career when his daughter Ann was five years of age, in the year 1774. Though her father was an actor

and manager, Ann had seen very few plays. The family resided in an elegant cottage near Bath, and Mrs. Brunton was the instructress of her children. Nothing was further from the thoughts of Mr. Brunton than a future career of fame for his children in the profession he had chosen for himself.

He taught his daughter to read Shakspeare, without any view to her becoming an actress. Coming home from rehearsal one day, he overheard her reciting Calista's speech upon the unfortunate condition of her sex, and, on expressing his surprise at the talents she displayed, he found that she had studied and could recite the parts of Juliet, Belvidera, and Euphrasia. After consulting his friends, the determination was suddenly taken to bring the young lady on the stage, Mr. Palmer, the Bath and Bristol manager, having pronounced her "another Siddons." In less than a week from the discovery of her talent for acting, she was brought on the stage in the character of Euphrasia, and received with the most unqualified applause by the public of Bristol. Her first appearance was for her father's benefit, he playing Evander. The father and daughter played a father and daughter.

Mr. Brunton spoke a prologue, written by Meyler, as an introduction to the young heroine of sixteen. All this was judicious preparation; but still the audience only expected to see a girl, a novice, perhaps a mawkin; but they saw with as-

tonishment a graceful and accomplished actress. The applause and commendation in and out of the theatre were proportionate to the surprise and admiration. The characters of Horatia, in *The Roman Father*, and Palmyra, in *Mahomet*, parts suited to her age and figure, succeeded, and increased her fame. Thus Siddons, the greatest tragedian we have ever seen, had to struggle through difficulties to reach that pinnacle on which she towered for almost half a century unrivalled, while Ann Brunton, a child in years, soared at once to almost an equal height. Mrs. Siddons had person, power, art, beyond all contemporaries — Mrs. Merry had voice and feeling, that went as direct to the heart of a feeling auditor as the ray of light to its destination.

Mr. Harris soon after engaged both her and her father for Covent Garden. In the season of 1785-6, the writer witnessed her first appearance on the London boards in the character of Horatia, in *The Roman Father*, Henderson playing Horatius. The streets adjacent to the theatre were crowded before the opening of the doors, and all the usual consequences of a *rush* ensued. Borne into the pit, we remained wedged in where the crowd placed us, but we were amply repaid for the sufferings experienced in narrow passages, while moved (although motionless from the shoulders downward) to the seat we were thrust into. The extraordinary self-possession of this young lady, not yet sixteen, when she appeared at Bristol the preceding year, has

been recorded by a witness, and it apparently did not desert her on this occasion. Her voice, never exceeded in sweetness and clearness, did not falter, her action was perfect; she was the Horatia of the poet, and London confirmed Mr. Palmer's opinion that she was "another Siddons." Yet there was no similarity except in mind. Their persons and manners were indeed opposite, and, as we have said above, though Mrs. Merry made her way direct to the heart, the prize was won by gentleness. But Siddons seized upon it with a force that was irresistible. We speak of her such as she was at the time Miss Brunton appeared in London, in the height of her power and popularity.

The town was prepared to see a wonder in Miss Brunton, and it was not disappointed. She was ushered in with those attentions which Mr. Harris thought due to merit. Murphy wrote a prologue to introduce her. Holman, then a young man, and new to the London audience, spoke the veteran's lines. Pope, likewise new in London, and Holman's rival, played the young hero of the piece; and Henderson, incomparably greater than either of them, played the father.

Holman, who had made his debut as the Romeo of Miss Younge the preceding winter, was now better mated in respect to age and personal appearance with the Juliet of Miss Brunton; and in *The Orphan*, her Monimia was supported by Holman, Pope, and Henderson, in Chamont, Castalio,

and Acasto. While Lear was in preparation for her Cordelia, Henderson, who was to personate the aged king and father, died—the greatest loss the English stage has sustained since Garrick. He was not so great a tragedian as Siddons, though greater than any other of his time; but he was as great a comedian as tragedian, and his Leon, Don John, and Falstaff, were perhaps never equalled.

Miss Brunton attracted the admiration of Mr. Robert Merry soon after her engagement at Covent Garden, and his person, fashion, address, and amiable disposition, added to the eclat of the Della Cruscan poetry, then estimated higher than since, won her heart and hand. She became Mrs. Merry, and retired from the stage as soon as her engagement was at an end. She was never known on the stage as Mrs. Merry in London.

In 1792, Miss Brunton was removed from the English dramatic world, and, as Mrs. Merry, visited the continent of Europe with her husband. Returning, they lived in retirement until 1796, when Merry's reduced fortune and his wife's love of a profession in which she was so eminently qualified to shine, led to an engagement with Wignell for Philadelphia; the poet being willing that his wife should appear as such, on the stage, in a foreign land and among republicans, though averse to the same public exhibition of her talents before his former acquaintance of St. James's and Bond Street. We have mentioned their arrival at New-

York on the 10th of October, 1796, and on the 5th of December, she was introduced to the public of Philadelphia as Juliet, Moreton being her Romeo.

Notwithstanding this great accession to the strength of the company, and Mrs. Merry playing all her great characters, the manager was a loser by the season ; and, as we have seen, led his forces to New-York, and opened as a theatre what was then known as Rickett's circus, in Greenwich Street.

Our most valuable correspondent, Mr. William B. Wood, of Philadelphia, whose opinions and recollections of acting and actors are in unison with our own, and who has furnished us with many valuable facts for this work, says, "The delight of the New-York people was at its height, when Mr. Wignell opened the Greenwich Street Circus with *Venice Preserved*, Jaffier, Moreton ; Pierre, Cooper ; Belvidera, Mrs. Merry ; and all the inferior parts well played"—and well might they be delighted.

Of this highly-gifted lady we shall have to speak, a pleasing task, again and again, in the course of our work.

Her accomplished husband was born in London, April, 1755, and was educated at Harrow. He entered at Christ Church College, Cambridge, but left the university without taking a degree. He was entered of Lincoln's Inn, but on the death of his father, bought into the Horse Guards, and served as adjutant and lieutenant. Quitting the service, he went abroad, and resided some years

at Florence, where he was elected a member of the Della Crusca Academy. This name he used, on his return to England, in his poetical publications. His first performed play was *Lorenzo*, and in *that* the same lady played as Miss Brunton, who supported his last dramatic production by her talents as Mrs. Merry.

Mr. Merry wrote several dramas, but they do not live as acting plays. His Della Crusca and Mrs. Cowley's Anna Matilda occupied public attention for a time. He wrote for the London Journals under the signature of "Tom Thorne," and felt the vengeance of the ministerial prints for expressing his republican opinions. Gifford, in the *Baviad* and *Mæviad*, put an end to Della Cruscan poetry.

All those who enjoyed the acquaintance of Mr. Merry have represented him as a well-informed, intelligent, amiable, man of genius. In early life he was a *bon vivant*. He was a good husband and steadfast friend, but indolent, and more addicted to ease and punning than disposed to the severe duties which man in society is called upon to fulfil.

On the first night of *The School for Scandal*, Merry whispered to a companion, "I wish the *dramatis personæ* would leave off talking, and let the play begin." Being in company with one of the cabinet ministers, the noble duke remarked, that, by supporting the constitution, his majesty had proved himself a good *upholder*. "True," said Merry, "but a bad *cabinet-maker*."

The only play he wrote (either the whole or in part) in America was called *The Abbey of St. Augustine*. It was played in Philadelphia in 1797. His dramatic productions in England were *Ambitious Vengeance*, tragic drama, 1790; *Lorenzo*, tragic, 1791, in which Miss Brunton, afterwards Mrs. Merry, performed the heroine; *The Magician no Conjuror*, comic opera, 1792; and *Fenelon*, serious drama, 1795.

Mr. Merry died at Baltimore in the latter part of the year 1798. The day before Christmas he walked out into the garden, apparently well, and was found helpless on the ground soon after. Mr. Wood, in a letter before us, says, "Mr. Merry's is an interesting recollection to me. In my early theatrical efforts, I felt myself indebted to him and his gifted wife for the best instructions I ever received. His death was to me a severe loss. He literally died in my arms, as some years after did his wife. No man possessed less guile. His latest words were most cheerful."

Mr. Thomas Abthorpe Cooper will command our attention next. We have spoken of his arrival in New-York at the same time that Mrs. Merry, accompanied by her accomplished and well known husband, landed on the shores of America. Mr. Cooper was born in 1776. His father was an Irish gentleman, a surgeon by profession, and long resided at Harrow on the Hill, but entered into the service of the East India Company, and died in India. His mother going to Holland when he

was between eight and nine years of age, the celebrated William Godwin, a friend of the deceased father, prevailed upon her to leave the boy with him, and was to him a father. We have noticed that at the time of his arrival and first visit to the John Street theatre, he called himself, in conversation, the son of Godwin ; " much more than a common father is he to me ; he has cherished and instructed me." Mr. Godwin was his preceptor, his monitor, his friend. He instructed him, as he could receive the instruction, in French, Latin, Italian, and Greek. He regularly read to him every day after dinner. Among the books thus read and explained were *Clarissa Harlowe*, and all Shakspeare's plays. It was customary for Mr. Godwin to dine every Sunday with his friend Holcroft, and Tom always went with him. Thus he lived with one of the most pure and benevolent of men until he was sixteen years of age, when, one morning, to the astonishment of the philosopher, Tom told him abruptly that he was tired of studying Latin and Greek, and thought it was time to go into the world, as he was able to take care of himself. Godwin, although surprised, asked him what he wished to do. Cooper replied, " Walk to Paris and join the republican army." Mr. Godwin only said, " We will talk further on the subject to-morrow morning."

By the persuasion of his friends, Godwin and Holcroft, the youth relinquished his military

schemes, and, as his great object was to be independent, he proposed, among other projects, that of becoming a chorus singer at one of the theatres. Whether in earnest, or only to gain time and turn his attention to something else, Holcroft made an appointment for Cooper to come to him that he might judge of his voice. On trial Holcroft said it would not do. Singing was given up, and acting was thought of. The young aspirant read *Zaphna*, and Holcroft declared it was hopeless; but, on his speaking a speech of Richard, hope was revived. Holcroft had played on, as well as written for, the stage, and was doubtless an admirable critic. He acted the part of Figaro when his translation of Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro* was performed at Covent Garden in 1785, under the title of *The Follies of a Day*. He was not then a player by profession, but for some reason performed the part on the first night, Bonner appearing in it on the second.

Cooper's friends finding his determination to be a hero of some sort invincible, preferred the stage to the army, and, after preparatory drilling and much deliberation as to the scene of operation, he was furnished with money and letters, and sent by the stage-coach to Edinburgh, where Stephen Kemble, commonly called the great Kemble from his bulk, was manager.

Arrived at the Scottish capital, Tom, who had heretofore retained the dress of a boy, put on the

apparel of manhood. His dangling locks were frizzed, powdered, and queued according to the fashion or folly of that day; and, in all the awkwardness which novelty of dress and situation bestowed, with a figure neither that of man nor boy, he waited upon that awe-inspiring personage, the manager. He was received politely, but when King Stephen opened his letter, and found him recommended for Young Norval, his smiles fled, and chagrin marked his countenance. Tom, though awkward from novelty of circumstances, was handsome, and nothing doubting his own talents or appearance. The manager took time to consider the business, and after another cool reception, a rehearsal was called, and Mr. Cooper was flattered with the idea of playing Young Norval, with Mrs. Siddons for Lady Randolph. The lady, however, did not attend rehearsal, but her husband was present to judge of the young debutant. Tom ranted. Kemble walked up and down the stage in silence. The rehearsal was over, and Cooper, perfectly satisfied with himself, concluded that Kemble, if dumb, was only so in consequence of extreme admiration, and waited the opening of the great man's mouth to receive his meed of praise—but all that fell from it was a request that he would wait on the manager next day. Still full of confidence, he kept the appointment to a minute. No thought had yet entered his head that could damp the heroic ardour of Young Nor-

val, or lower the tone in which he had shouted, "The blood of Douglas can support itself."

"This is a very difficult part you have chosen, Mr. Cooper."

"Very difficult, sir," with a smile which said, "but not too difficult for me."

"You had better think of something else."

Here the veil was drawn aside ; the reality appeared. Tom was rejected. *Douglas* was performed. He saw another hero fill the space he expected to occupy, and receive the plaudits hope had promised and dreams had already given him.

He remained with the company unemployed until they removed to Newcastle-upon-Tyne ; there he was occasionally "sent on," as the phrase is, remaining unnoticed, dependent, and in the very worst school a youth of seventeen could be in, until by some chance, or as the last resort of the manager, the part of Malcolm, in the tragedy of *Macbeth*, was assigned to him. In this humble part, in that play which appeared to receive new lustre from his representing the principal character at a day not far distant, did this great tragedian make his debut. And he was hissed before he got through this first effort. Till the last scene, he passed through neither noticed nor applauded ; but when he came to the lines which conclude the play, called the *tag*, and the audience expected to hear the well-known lines,

So thanks to all at once, and to each one

Whom we invite to see the crowned Scone—

the heir of Duncan and successor of Macbeth stretched forth his hand and assumed the royal smile of condescension; he saw the people rising in the theatre to depart; he lost his presence of mind and all recollection of the gracious words he had been prepared to utter—confusion begat terror, and he stood silent and motionless, his royal hand held forth and lips unclosed. The prompter was heard, “So thanks to all”—Macduff whispered, “So thanks to all”—Macbeth, though long dead, echoed, “So thanks to all”—the audience spoke to him no thanks but hisses—Tom continued with outstretched hand and unmeaning smile, and so might have continued, had not Macbeth ordered the trumpet to sound, and the curtain to fall, amid the hisses and hootings of the audience.

The manager rose, and ordered young Malcolm to follow him. Then, and not till then, did Tom move or cease to play Orator Mum.

“Order the treasurer to pay Mr. Cooper five pounds. Mr. Cooper, I have no further service for you.”

Thus terminated our hero's first campaign, and he was happy to find himself once more at the hospitable hearth of William Godwin, after having expended his last penny to pay his passage back to London in a collier.

His friends, being convinced that he had the requisites for a tragedian, or, to use Sheridan's words of himself, “that he had it in him,” advised

him to try some of the country theatres, and he was sent to Portsmouth. He here first met Tyler, a short time before his engagement with Hodgkinson for America. Tyler has told the writer that he thought him a most unpromising boy, and was astonished, when in New-York, to hear that this same good-for-naught stripling was playing Hamlet and Macbeth with success in London.

At Portsmouth he received a small salary, was not intrusted with any business that called forth his exertion or excited his ambition, and in idleness and dissipation he was forgetting the precious precepts implanted by his instructors. They recalled him to London, and, finding him still determined to be a player, they set themselves anew to the task of qualifying him for success.

Cooper now no longer lived under Mr. Godwin's roof, but that friend and Holcroft directed his studies avowedly for the stage, and he was well instructed in Hamlet and Macbeth before he again exposed himself to an audience. Hamlet was chosen for his trial part, and every account of that night's performance mentions it as one of the most successful ever remembered. Macklin, the Nestor of the stage, so pronounced it, and congratulated the triumphant youth accordingly. Macbeth followed with equal success. Thus, before he was nineteen years of age, the despised boy had triumphed in the two most difficult characters of the drama, and received the ap-

plauses of those who had witnessed the veteran skill of Garrick, Henderson, and Kemble.

Mr. Cooper was brought forward soon after in Lothario—"the gallant, gay Lothario." If Godwin and Holcroft advised this, it was lamentably misjudged. The qualifications for Hamlet or Macbeth may be possessed by an actor, and not one requisite for Lothario be in his possession. To add to his *stiffness*, Mr. Lewis put him in a suit of clothes too small—it was a failure. He was offered an inferior line of business by Mr. Harris, with an engagement for Covent Garden, but refused it. Fifty guineas was the payment for his services, and he retired into Wales to study. It appears, however, that, in September, 1796, Mr. Cooper was performing at Cheltenham.

Wignell now arrived in London, and heard of Cooper's fame. Holcroft was applied to, as was Godwin, in respect to an engagement for Philadelphia, and offers made to induce the young actor to leave England. The following letter will show their sentiments on the subject. The first part appears to be in reply to some complaints made by Cooper.

You do not like the word lamentation. You will less like the word I am going to use. But before I use it, I will most sincerely assure you I mean it kindly. I do not like rhodomontade heroics. They are discordant, grating, and degrading. They are the very reverse of what you imagine them to be. It was not from report, but from your letter itself, that I collected my idea of lamentation: and, compared to your sufferings, I repeat, Jeremiah never lamented so loudly: at least, such is my opinion, and I hope you did not intend,

by a hackneyed and coarse quotation, to deter me from saying that which I think may awaken your attention. If you did, it was in a moment of forgetfulness; for you know that a man of principle ought not to be so deterred. I speak plainly from the very sincere wish, which I so long have cherished, of rousing you at once to the exertions of genius, and the sagacity of benevolence and urbanity. It is to exercise benevolence and urbanity myself, that I am thus intent in wiping from your mind all impressions of supposed rudeness or rigour in thus addressing you.

And now to business: after just reminding you that, though you did not wish me to apply for a London engagement for you, it would have looked quite as friendly had you written to me without this personal motive.

Mr. Wignell, the manager of the theatres of Philadelphia and Baltimore, in America, has applied to me, offering you four, five, and six guineas a week, forty weeks each year, for three succeeding years; and ensuring benefits to the amount of a hundred and fifty guineas. I have reflected on the subject, and have consulted your other true and tried friend, Mr. Godwin; and notwithstanding that this offer is so alluring, it is our decided opinion that, were it ten times as great, it ought to be rejected. As an actor, you would be extinct, and the very season of energy and improvement would be for ever passed. I speak of men as they are now constituted; and after the manner, as experience tells me, that their habits become fixed, eradicably fixed. Mr. Godwin indeed expresses himself with great force, mixed with some little dread, lest money should be a temptation that you could not withstand. However, we both knew it to be but right that the decision should be entirely your own; and I therefore send you this information. Be kind enough to return me your answer; and, without regarding my or any man's opinion, judge for yourself. It is right that Mr. Wignell should not be kept in suspense. Yours, kindly and sincerely,

T. HOLCROFT.

September 3d, 1796.

The above is a transcript of a letter which was dated August the 26th, and directed to you at Swansea, where I suppose it is left. Let me request an immediate answer.

A gentleman has just been with me on the part of Mr. Daly, who is to be in town in nine or ten days, and wishes to engage you for the winter season, but this I think as prejudicial, except that it is something nearer home, and not so durable an engagement as America. Ireland is certainly the school of idleness. However, all these matters must be left to yourself.

This was directed, "Mr. Cooper, Theatre, Cheltenham," by as true a friend as ever man had, but the views of youth are ever widely different from those of age. Cooper chose to embark upon the sea of adventure and the Atlantic, and to try a new scene in a New World.

Mr. Cooper, before embarking for America, went to London to see and take leave of his two best friends, and both Godwin and Holcroft attended him to the coach, when he left the metropolis to join the companions of his voyage.

Godwin and Holcroft are both important in literary history generally, and particularly entitled to notice as dramatists. Mr. Cooper remembered Godwin, when he first knew him, in his clerical dress—a black suit, large cocked hat, his hair frizzed at the sides and curled stiffly behind. He is a small, well-made man, with a thin face, large nose, blue eyes, and most placid countenance. He changed his dress to a blue coat, yellow cassimere breeches, very blue white silk stockings (the same in which he equipped Cooper for his Scotch expedition), his hair plaited behind, instead of the single clerical curl, and the large cocked hat was dismissed and replaced by a round one. At this time he put on spectacles. The last dress his pupil saw him in when he left home was a plain suit, with short, unpowdered hair; and the dress of Holcroft was perfectly similar.

Mr. Godwin is principally known among the readers of the present day as the author of Caleb Williams, but will be known hereafter as the his-

torian of the English Commonwealth, the vindicator of our forefathers, the glorious republicans, to whose enlightened opposition, when the first Charles asserted the divine rights of monarchy, England and America may trace the origin of their liberty. That Godwin's History of the Commonwealth has not been reprinted among us shows an apathy or an ignorance that ought to be amended. Mr. Godwin wrote one tragedy, called *Anthonio*. He is now between seventy and eighty years of age, and, to use his own expression, "a destitute man of letters"—we will add—a man of first-rate talents, poor and neglected, in the land he has loved and faithfully served. But he is a republican.

We have mentioned Mr. Cooper's arrival in New-York on the 18th of October, 1796, whence he proceeded with Wignell to Philadelphia, and made his first appearance in America in the character of Macbeth, on the 9th of December, 1796.

The first line in tragedy was preoccupied in Philadelphia by Fennell, who, having come out with the first company of Wignell and Reinagle, had preoccupied likewise the favour of the public, especially the literary men. Tall, handsome in person, specious in manner, well educated, and ever courteous, Fennell as a gentleman at this time stood high. He lived splendidly, and far beyond his income, courted the world, and was courted in return. Cooper's character and conduct was as opposite as possible. Frank, fearless, and too

careless—he soon made friends, but they were the younger and less influential portion of the population. Such was the state of things at that time, and discontent was the consequence. He had refused an engagement to play inferior parts in London, and the great parts were pre-occupied in Philadelphia.

When the time arrived for his first benefit, the seats were not taken. To be sure, he was ensured by the manager to a certain amount. This did not satisfy Cooper, and he hired for sixty dollars an elephant that had just arrived, and advertised the new performer for Mr. Cooper's benefit. Those who had declined to take seats to see and support the best tragedian, although not yet so finished as afterwards, that had yet played in America, filled the house to overflowing to see the stage dishonoured by an elephant.

Early in May, 1797, the writer saw Mr. Cooper for the second time. It was on the stage at a rehearsal, in the Chestnut Street theatre. The first time we had an opportunity of seeing him play was not in a character suited to him—it was the Serious Father, in the comedy of *The Way to get Married*. Yet in this he exceeded expectation. Mrs. Merry was the Julia Falkner, and Moreton the finest Tangent we ever saw. We shall next notice a great comedian.

Mr. John Bernard was the son of a lieutenant in the English navy, and born at Portsmouth in 1756. His first applause was gained at the aca-

demy where he had been educated, and where, like the Goshen youth already mentioned, he played the biggest parts because he was the biggest boy. John played Hamlet, he being then sixteen, and about leaving school. "All went on very smoothly," he says, "until the scene with the ghost, when a bungling rascal, whose part for the night was to sit above on a beam and pull up the three baize table-cloths tacked together into a curtain, and at the moment I pronounced the words, 'Alas, poor ghost!' the roller, becoming disengaged, descended with a swift thwack upon the royal Dane's head, and prostrated him to the earth, amid an uproar of laughter!" Bernard's father being at sea, and the boy now idle, thought only of acting, and determined to try his hand with a strolling company that had put up their flag at the Black Bull in Farnham. As this may serve for a picture of such theatricals, we will extract the description of Manager Jackson's establishment.

"He had engaged the largest room at the said Black Bull, suspended a collection of tatters along its middle for a curtain, erected a pair of paper screens, right hand and left, for wings; arranged four candles in front of said wings, to divide the stage from the orchestra (the fiddlers' chairs being the legitimate division of the orchestra from the pit); and, with all the spare benches of the inn to form boxes, and a hoop suspended from the ceiling (perforated with a dozen nails to receive as many

tallow candles) to suggest the idea of a chandelier; he had constructed and embellished what he called a theatre. The scenery consisted of two drops,"—scenes which roll up—"the inside of a house and the outside of a house." The first was a kitchen, with all its implements; "by the simple introduction of two chairs and a table, this was constituted a gentleman's parlour; and, in the further presence of a crimson-cushioned yellow-legged elbow-chair, with a banner behind and a stool in front, was elevated into a royal hall of audience. The other drop (which I have termed outside of a house) presented on its surface two houses peeping in at the sides, a hill, a wood, a stream, a bridge, and a distant plain."

Thus, the spectator might imagine himself in a street, a wood, by a stream, &c. Some other boys joined Bernard in filling Manager Jackson's theatre; but their parents finding out what was going forward, their mothers agreed to go in a body to the spot and witness the scene; the consequence was, that Jaffier and Pierre, and all the rest of the conspirators, were made prisoners, and conducted home by the good ladies, amid the shouts of the clowns of the village.

Bernard's father being disappointed in getting him on board a ship of war, articulated him to an attorney. The boy jumped out of the window and ran away. Being rejected at Bristol, he made his *debut* at the village of Chew Magna, in the character of Jaffier. Engaged, he was regularly in-

serted in the bills as Mr. Budd, a young gentleman only seventeen years of age. He received for his first payment a share of eight shillings and three tallow candles. After various strolling adventures and starvations, he met his mother at Weymouth, and returned home with her, promising amendment. But notwithstanding every inducement which duty to a good and indulgent mother could present, the worse than thoughtless boy again left his employment and his parent; and, after wandering about in want, among those who disgrace a profession by assuming its title without possessing its requisites, he again returned to his sorrowing mother. With the consent of both his parents, the youth subsequently was devoted to the stage, a profession for which he had talents of a high order, and in which, having obtained the necessary skill, he became a distinguished artist.

Having married a prudent woman and good actress, and found in Griffiths, the Norwich manager, a judicious friend, Bernard renounced the faults and vices contracted during his low rambling life, and by degrees became what we in America have seen him, an excellent comic actor. In the winter of 1777-8, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard made their appearance on the Bath boards as Gratiano and Portia; Henderson, the best actor the writer of this work ever saw except Mrs. Siddons, played Shylock. Henderson was about this time engaged for Covent Garden, and remained the unrivalled

actor of London until 1786-7, dying in the flower of life and fulness of fame, as a gentleman, a scholar, and an actor.

In 1782, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard made an engagement with "Daly, the Irish manager," and played at Cork and Dublin. At Cork he quarrelled with his manager; his wife fell sick; and his circumstances were in a very sorry condition, when John Kemble relieved him by a proffered loan in the most friendly and delicate manner. "This," says he, "was a kindness I never forgot. John Kemble was a reserved man, a peculiar man, perhaps a proud man; but, to the last hour of my life, I will maintain that he was an honourable man, a faithful man, and a man of as much tenderness as integrity."

Travelling from Cork to Limerick, and stopping for the night at a village called Mallow, he and his companions were invited to attend a theatrical exhibition which he thus describes:—The construction of the theatre did not importantly differ from that of many I had played in in my early days. It was the interior of a barn; the hayloft being naturally adapted for the gallery; the boxes formed by rough boards nailed to four uprights; the stage being divided from the pit by a board bored with holes as the sockets for so many candles or foot-lights; the scenery was, *secundem artem*, things of shreds and patches; and the green curtain a piece of gray antiquity, that went up and down, in momentary danger of dissolution.

Our amusement commenced the moment we entered the house, in listening to a conversation that was going on between the gallery and the orchestra, the latter composed of a performer on the violin and one on the big drum. "Mr. Patrick Moriarty," shouted the combiner of horse-hair and catgut, "how are you, my jewel?" "Aisy and impudent, Teddy O'Hoone; how are you? How's your sow?" "Mischievous and tender like all her sex. What tune would it plase you to have, Mr. Patrick Moriarty?" Mr. Patrick was indifferent, and referred the matter to a committee of females. In the mean time, Teddy began to tune up, at which another of his "divine" companions above assailed him: "Arra! Teddy O'Hoone! Teddy, you divil"—"What do you say, Larry Kennedy?"—"Tip us a tune on your fiddle-dee-de, and don't stand there making the cratcher squake like a hog in a holly-bush. Paddy Byrne" (to the drummer) —"What do you say, Mr. Kennedy?"—"Aint you a jewel now to be sitting there at your aise, when here's a whole cockloft full of jontlemen come to hear you thump your big bit of cowhide on the top of a butter tub."

This specimen of "wild Irish theatricals," with the former description of manager Jackson's display, will suffice for our readers. The actors in both cases suited the scenery and the audience. A refined audience will only tolerate a refined moral exhibition, and such performers as are fitting to amuse and instruct them. It is the audience that

gives the tone to every part of the theatre. Where there is the best audience, there will be the best actors, and the best plays, and the most attractive decorations, music and scenery, and to such a place even the vulgar will come for his own pleasure ; and, being restrained, will be eventually amended.

Bernard, in 1784, performed with the Bath company. Here he first met with Mr. Blanchard, afterwards well known on the London stage, and recently (1832) arrived in this country.

No person meets so many adventures or becomes acquainted with so many characters as an actor whose talents give him eclat. Among the many recorded by Bernard are the late Sir Thomas Lawrence and his father, who had been an actor, and was in 1786 an innkeeper at Devizes*. Fond of his original profession, he frequented the Bath theatre, and brought with him his son Tom, who was remarkable for good recitation as well as early cleverness with the pencil. In his sixteenth year, the future president of the Royal Academy was a candidate for the stage, and was with difficulty persuaded to give up a profession so alluring to a beautiful and talented youth. His father was opposed to his wishes, and filial duty was rewarded by a splendid life of honour, and an immortal name as the best of English portrait-painters.

* This circumstance is not mentioned by D. E. Williams, Esq., in his *Life of Lawrence* but we rely upon Bernard's testimony.

Mr. Bernard's first attempt as an author was in a farce called *The Whimsical Ladies*, which produced profit to the theatre and the writer.

In the winter of 1787, Mr. Bernard attained the height of his wishes as an actor, by a successful appearance and engagement at Covent Garden theatre, his salary fixed at "ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen pounds." His engagement was for the fops, fine gentlemen, and higher line of comedy; but owing to Edwin's frequent indisposition from a cause similar to that which destroyed Cooke, Bernard was thrust into low comedy, and became very excellent in that line of playing. Mrs. Bernard not being satisfied at Covent Garden, we find Bernard in 1791 at Plymouth, under the management of the father of Mr. Jefferson, late of the New-York and Philadelphia companies.

Bernard had the direction of several minor theatres, and among others, that of Guernsey. At this place he employed as a prompter a non-commissioned officer, quartered there, who is connected indirectly with the drama of America. Archibald McLaren was a native of the Highlands of Scotland, and had served as a private under Sir William Howe, in the American war of 1776. This soldier cultivated a taste for poetry during the hardships of war and the privations incident to his ineligible situation. He wrote, in America, a farce called *The Coup de Main*, which, on his return to Scotland, was performed at Edinburgh in the year 1783.

After trying a round of provincial theatres, Mr. Bernard returned to Covent Garden, and opened in *Lord Ogilby*, which he played in a style that rivalled the original Lord Ogilby of King. He produced that season a second farce, called *The Poor Sailor*.

In the summer of 1797, Mr. Bernard engaged with Mr. Wignell, after procuring a release from Mr. Harris, and embarked for America on the 4th of June, 1797, making his first appearance at the Greenwich Street theatre, N. York, as Goldfinch, in *The Road to Ruin*. We shall have occasion to mention this gentleman frequently in the course of this work, for, although the claim he makes of being one of the founders of the American stage is totally *unfounded*, he was a support and an ornament to it, and his memory is cherished as an actor and a man. At this place we will briefly state, that, on the company of Wignell and Reinagle removing to their winter-quarters in Philadelphia, Mr. Bernard was brought out in Ruttekin, the tinker, in *Robin Hood*, and Young Wilding in *The Liar*. He remained in the Philadelphia company until 1803, when Mr. Powell engaged him for Boston, and brought him out in Humphrey Gubbins, in *The Battle of Hexham*.

In the winter of 1804, Mr. Bernard gained additional fame by his representation of Lovegold in *The Miser*, and in 1806, he became one of the managers of the Boston theatre, and in the summer of that year went to England for recruits.

Of Mr. William Warren we have ample materials for such brief notice as our limits will allow. He was born in the year 1767, in the city of Bath. His father, a respectable mechanic, gave him an education intended to fit him for following in his steps; but the boy, like many others we have noticed, preferred idleness and pleasure to application and labour, and, having been applauded for boyish attempts at acting, was unfit for the occupation of a cabinet-maker, which was that of his father and was intended for him.

At the age of seventeen, Warren made his appearance as a player in the character of Young Norval, with a company who were making tragedy comical, and lowering comedy to farce, at Chippenham. His reception encouraged him to proceed in the career he had chosen. In this strolling company, under the management of one Biggs, he played all the first parts in tragedy and comedy, and of course gained some professional knowledge though the school was bad. For this first line of playing the young hero received less than four shillings per week.

Leaving Manager Biggs, he joined the forces of another stroller called "Tag Davis," who had a company of a higher order; among them was Riley, known as the author of an amusing book called *The Itinerant*, and Bignell, afterwards in America, but only known to the south. At the end of the season, Warren, too poor to pay for a place

in the stage, walked home to the house of his indulgent parents.

There appears to be no cure for the disease of strolling, or, as De Foe has it in his *Robinson Crusoe*, "What is bred in the bone will never be out of the flesh." Warren had become attached to Davis, as well as to a rambling life, and again joined him. Poverty was as much attached to that company now as before, and Riley records their situation at Lyme, utterly penniless, and without food, which could only be procured by stratagem. On this occasion he mentions Warren as exclaiming in mock heroics, "Was it for this I left my father's shop!" and then adding from *Dogberry*, "Would he were here to write me down an ass!"

Biggs, his first manager, having a company in the neighbourhood of Davis's barn, Warren now did double duty, *starring* it in both companies, walking from Lyme to Bedminster and back again, to serve his two masters, not having profit enough from his "double toil and trouble" to pay for any other "leathern convenience" than his shoes.

Warren's next engagement was with Manager Jefferson, the father of the excellent comedian we have mentioned as joining the old American Company at Boston, and coming with them to New-York in 1796. From Jefferson's company he was induced to return to his friend Biggs by the tempting offer of ten shillings per week, a little more than two dollars. This enabled the rising hero to

ride, on the top of the stage, to the place of destination. In Warren's rambles, he met two performers afterwards well known in New-York and Boston, Mrs. Hogg and Mr. Baker.

After several changes of place and manager, Biggs, having been deserted by most of his company, followed Warren and another stroller of the name of Woolley, and, being unable to persuade them to return, arrested them both ; and, carrying them, guarded by a constable, before a magistrate, swore they were journeymen tailors who had deserted from him, and left clothes unfinished which they had engaged to complete. The magistrate discharged the young men, advising them to return to their homes and parents. This advice was not followed, and Tag Davis having a new opposition house built for him in Exeter, by a man who was rich enough to indulge his desire to overthrow the established dynasty, Tag invited Warren to join his company, which he accordingly accepted.

To give the American reader an idea of the contempt shown in England by people of every condition towards the members of strolling companies, we will relate two anecdotes of Warren. Biggs, who seems to have considered Warren essential to his well-being, again followed him, and endeavoured to prevail on him to rejoin his company ; but, not succeeding, changed his persuasive tone to abuse, which he carried so far as to provoke Warren to break his pipe over the manager's head. For this assault on majesty, Biggs again took him,

with the aid of a constable, on charge of assault and battery, and the justice hearing the accuser state that the accused was a strolling player, was about committing him to jail; but Warren retorted the title of strolling manager on Biggs, and the magistrate dismissed both with contempt and injurious epithets from his august presence.

The second concerns the treatment of the whole of Mr Jefferson's company. One Mr. Carey, a man of fortune, on occasion of some family festival, applied to Jefferson, and engaged his company to come to Tor Abbey, his place of residence, and perform a play. Accordingly, they all proceeded thither, not in carts or on foot, as most of them usually travelled, but, attended by their very respectable manager, in coaches, post-chaises, and gigs. When they arrived at Tor Abbey, they were shewn into the servants' hall, where a table and dinner were prepared for them.

Jefferson sent a remonstrance to Carey, and the company prevailed on the manager to take a coach and turn his back on the aristocrat, while they performed a play for his emolument. They then refused food in the inhospitable mansion, and Mr. Carey, finding the actors so stomachful, made his appearance and apologies, showed them into a more dignified part of his house, and prevailed on them to take food more nourishing than the air of offended pride which they had assumed and were endeavouring to digest for the occasion. They ate and drank, and played their play and farce for the

amusement of the great man and his family, and returned home content.

That most actors receive an education in the school of folly, thoughtless dissipation, or positive vice, which the degrading scenes belonging to the life of a strolling player in England invariably furnish, must be apparent to every one who reads the books which have been published on the subject. That so many come out of the furnace, if not purified, yet so far uninjured as to assume the rank of respectable and honourable men, is truly wonderful. If we look back upon the lives of most of those performers who have come to America and have challenged admiration as actors and respect as men, we shall find that they have passed through, from early youth to manhood, a succession of scenes sufficient to destroy all sense of moral propriety. To have passed through such scenes, with such debased and debasing associates, and yet stand erect in society, is proof of uncommon merit; that many sink never to rise is plain.

This evil does not exist in America to any great extent, and may be prevented altogether. We see those who have submitted to the disgrace of a stroller's life in England take a higher stand in this country, and maintain it. They feel that they are not degraded by the presence of a privileged order; and if the mere moneyed aristocrat assumes airs of superiority, they feel authorized to resist the assumption. Having thrown off the stigma which the laws of their own country had affixed to

them, they feel bound to assume, with the more elevated character, a more elevated deportment and conduct.

The frequent recurrence of poverty, insult, and disgrace, at length, as the novelty and enticements of licentious liberty began to lose their charms, brought Warren to reflect upon the folly of his conduct. "He had experienced," says Carpenter, "poverty in its most intolerable shape, hunger." He had found that innocence was not a protection to the player, if accused of a crime, for the magistrates considered him as a vagabond. "Indeed," he continues, "what could he hope, seeing as he did so much penury around him, and at the same time so much ignorance and incapacity in many of his associates." While thus ruminating on his sad condition, he received a letter from his father, inviting him home; and, hoping to qualify himself for and obtain a higher post in the profession he had chosen, he returned to the paternal roof.

After a few weeks at home, through the influence of Incledon, Blanchard, and other London actors, with whom he became acquainted, he got a situation in a respectable provincial theatre, and obtained the friendship of Mr. Dowton. He now strove to make himself truly an artist, and by industry and good conduct acquired skill and importance in his profession.

Warren was a member of the Salisbury theatrical corps in 1787, when a prosecution was instituted through malice against the proprietor, and he was

cast on the old vagrant act. This caused the repeal of the statute, and a protecting act was passed, by which justices of peace were enjoined to license and protect any manager who chose to establish a theatre. From this time the now prudent actor increased in reputation and emoluments. In 1788, he was engaged by Tate Wilkinson, well known by all who have attended to the English theatre; and, Mrs. Siddons being engaged to perform at York, Mr. Warren had the advantage of playing several characters with that first of tragedians. His habits of industry and attention to the business of the scene gained him the approbation of this lady, who in her provincial tours was annoyed very generally by the absence of those virtues.

In this situation, a favoured performer in a respectable company, directed by a man of talents, Mr. Wignell, in 1796, found the subject of this notice, and made him offers which engaged him for America. Warren was then married, and, as the highest salary in the company was a guinea and a half a week, the salaries given by American managers must have appeared tempting. Mr. Warren was engaged for Philadelphia, and, repairing to London, embarked at Gravesend, whence dropping down to the Downs, the vessel took in Mr. and Mrs. Merry and Mr. Cooper, and reached New-York in 21 days. Mr. Warren's first characters in Philadelphia were Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Bundle in *The Waterman*.

Thus Mr. Warren, after passing through scenes in real life which, as we have seen, seem sufficient to destroy every good habit, if not principle, in man, was landed on a shore where he was safe from such contact ; for, in the company of such performers as composed the company of Philadelphia for many years, the ill habits acquired in English strolling companies would be discouraged, and, if possible, eradicated. In Mr. Warren's case we have reason to believe that what might have been wrong had been previously rectified, and we only remember him as a pleasant companion and an upright man. The characters he sustained with the highest reputation in the drama, were Falstaff, Sir Peter Teazle, Old Norval, Brabantio, Sir Anthony Absolute, and the like, in tragedy and comedy.

It will be seen by referring to the list of names at the end of the preceding Chapter, that Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock, the Darleys, father and son, Chalmers, Miss Broadhurst, and Mr. Bates, are not on the list ; having already parted from their companions of 1794. Their successors, already noticed, were Mr. Cooper, Mrs. Merry, Mr. Warren, Mr. Bernard, Mr. and Mrs. Lestranger ; to these are to be added Messrs. Fox, Hardinge, and Byrne, with Mesdames Hardinge and Byrne.

Mr. Fox, originally an engraver, was yet a youth, and added to talents as an actor a voice for, and and some knowledge of, music.

Mr. Hardinge was the Irishman of the company, and Mrs. Hardinge a second lady for comedy or tragedy.

Mr. and Mrs. Byrne were dancers ; he a ballet-master, and both had been first in their line at Covent Garden theatre. We remember him as Master Byrne, 1786.

In addition to Milbourne, as his scene-painter, Mr. Wignell engaged the services of Mr. John Joseph Holland, whom he found at the Opera-house, London, where he had been educated for his profession. Mr. Holland was still a young man, although married, and with his wife arrived in 1796 at New-York. Holland has often laughed at his profound ignorance of the country to which he was emigrating, an ignorance which is perpetuated as far as possible to this day by the efforts of the government, or at least those writers who have the sanction of the government and the confidence of the people. This ignorance is fast passing away, but at the time Holland came to New-York, 1796, not having an opportunity to consult Wignell on the subject, he brought out his household and kitchen furniture with him, fully persuaded that such articles could not be procured (at least of equally good quality) in the savage country he was embarking for. The ship arrived in the evening, and was anchored in the East river, and Holland went on shore to reconnoitre—all was astonishment and enchantment—he was

among white men who spoke English, not but that he had been told this before, but we never realize the objects we are to meet abroad from mere description or information, until travelling has given us a second education, and no Englishman ever expects to find any thing good out of his own blessed isle. The young painter walked up to Wall Street, by the light of lamps and on good flag-stone pavement; he saw tall brick houses; he saw pillars, pilasters, and porticoes; he arrived in Broadway, and was still more astonished; he got as far as St. Paul's, but when he saw the beautiful Roman Ionic columns of that chapel, he could go no further, but hastened back to congratulate his wife that they were in a civilized land, and to recount the wonders he had seen. Holland's feelings were such as a native of our seaboard cities feels when, travelling into the country of the Iroquois, he finds, instead of forests, the cities of Utica and Rochester.

This accomplished architect had prepared the house, which had been previously occupied as a circus, for the reception of the best company of performers that have ever been seen in America. The Greenwich Street circus was fitted up and decorated as an elegant summer theatre. The John Street house, in its decay, was occupied as we have seen by Solee, and an ill-assorted, ill-directed company; many of them excellent actors. The Park theatre was now being prepared for the old American Company.

On the 18th of August, 1797, "the principal performers of the Boston and Charleston theatres" opened in John Street with *The Wonder* and *Spoiled Child*; and on the 21st, played *The Mountaineers* and *Spoiled Child*.

The same evening, the 21st, the Greenwich Street theatre opened with *Venice Preserved*, Mrs. Merry, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Moreton, playing the principal characters.

The two houses went on striving against each other, and each injuring the other, and neither company supported by the receipt of expenses. A brief notice of some of the plays for a short time will convey the best image of the mimic world at this period at New-York.

August 30th, John Street, *Isabella*, by Mrs. Whitlock. Greenwich Street, *Child of Nature*—Amanthis, Mrs. Merry; *Critic*—Puff, Mr. Bernard.

September 1st, John Street, *School for Scandal*. Greenwich Street the same. John Street was sick and put off; and the next day announced, "that the celebrated tragedy of *Bunker's Hill* was in preparation, and would soon be performed."

Accordingly, *Bunker's Hill* was brought out, with all the smoke, noise, and nonsense, belonging to Mr. John Burk's muse; and Greenwich Street had nothing to oppose but Shakspeare's and Mrs. Merry's Juliet; the Romeo by Moreton, the Mercutio by Bernard, and every part supported by the names we have above recorded. But

what were these to "a scuffle nicely managed," the "English falling back," and "two or three Englishmen rolling down the hill, a meeting-house on fire, with flames and smoke issuing from it, the smoke and confusion producing an effect scarce credible," as described in the author's letter given above?

Wignell, finding that fire and smoke pleased the public, determined to give them a volcano. Morton's *Columbus* was got up with all the taste, splendour, and skill of such a manager, such a company, and such a scene-painter as Holland, combined. Wignell spoke the prologue, Cooper played Columbus, Mrs. Merry Cora, Mr. Moreton Alonzo. And, notwithstanding that the John Street hill was turned into a volcano, and *Columbus* advertised for the same night, September 11th, 1797, the combined corps of Boston and Charleston were obliged to retreat soon after, and not with flying colours.

Wignell closed his temporary establishment with loss, but credit; and drew off his forces to their winter-quarters.

CHAPTER XVI.

Critics — Critiques — Plays, Players, and Playwrights — Remarks of John Wells, Esq. on altering the titles of English Plays and passing them for American — A Hint to English Dramatists on the same Subject.

IN the year 1796, that memorable year in the theatrical history of the New World which gave to New-York a band of distinguished actors, at the head of whom stood Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Jefferson ; and to Philadelphia, Mrs. Merry, and Messrs. Cooper and Warren ; a company of critics was organized, who may not unaptly be characterized as sharp-shooters.

These gentlemen were regular frequenters of the New-York theatre, enjoyed its productions as men of education and lovers of literature, and wished to correct the abuses existing in the costume, demeanour, and general conduct, of the actors on the stage.

Messrs. John Wells, Elias Hicks, Samuel Jones, William Cutting, Peter Irving, and Charles Adams, formed themselves into a species of dramatic censorship, and by turns put down their remarks on the play of the evening, meeting next evening to criticise the critique, and give it passport to the press. The last named of these gentlemen was

only distinguished as being the son and brother of presidents of the United States; others are known as distinguished by their own talents and attainments. They signed with the initials of their names, the last letter being the actual writer. Finding that these initials led to the detection of the offenders against the liberty of murdering plays at will, they inserted other letters to mislead, but still continued the last as the initial of the writer. The letter D is frequently inserted, although no person whose name begins with that letter belonged to or wrote for the club; the rogues intended to throw some of the credit on the writer of this work. We will review these effusions of the box critics of that day—for the pit had even then ceased to be the centre from which public opinion was to be enlightened on subjects of theatrical taste.

Farquhar's *Inconstant*, injudiciously revived by Hodgkinson, they condemn; and do not approve Cumberland's *Wheel of Fortune*, a play which, with Cooper's *Penruddock*, and other alterations of the cast, became a favourite. They speak respectfully of Mr. Hodgkinson's *Penruddock*, and of Mrs. Johnson's *Emily Tempest*—of Mr. Jefferson's *Daw* they say it had "confirmed the favourable impression he had made." Of Prigmore, who played *Tempest*, they say, "We have desisted from remarking on our old acquaintance, Prigmore, in the hope he might (at least by accident) afford us something to applaud. But that same

uniformity of acting, which has ever characterized him, still continues, and we can find in him no other difference than may be found in a 'cocked up hat' and a 'hat cocked up.'" They speak of attempts behind the scenes *to get up* applause, by beginning to knock or clap "whenever the manager has delivered any thing extremely witty or sentimental. Whether it is by direction of him 'whose sole ambition is the lust of praise,' or proceeds from the officiousness of some candidate for managerial favour, we shall not pretend to determine."

Mr. King and Mr. Cleveland, in Woodville and Harry, they censure altogether.

The farce of *The Flitch of Bacon* they condemn *in toto*. Of *The Agreeable Surprise* they speak in terms of high praise, and especially Hodgkinson's Lingo—but they justly censure him for casting the part of Widow Cheshire to a man of the name of Lee—a heavy, stupid, vulgar fellow, with no requisite for the stage but a bass voice and some knowledge of music. So was the Widow Cheshire personated on the 9th of March, 1796.

O'Keefe's *Young Quaker* calls forth the approbation of our sharp-shooters, and they praise Mr. Hallam's Clod, and Mrs. Hallam's pretty Dinah Primrose. Of *No Song No Supper* the approbation is full, particularly of Hodgkinson's matchless Robin. Jefferson falls under the lash as Endless, but, for once, Prigmore is praised, and he deserved it, in Crop. He played the part and sung the songs in perfection. Miss Broadhurst, a little, timid,

gentle creature, is always a favourite with these Mohawks.

It appears by the remarks of this band of scalpers and tomahawkers on *The School for Scandal*, that they truly estimated its beauties and immoralities, and that they had seen the play played in times past. They remark: Though Mrs. Hallam in *Lady Teazle*, and Mr. Hallam in *Sir Peter*, equalled our expectations, we could not forget that Mr. and Mrs. Henry formerly appeared in those characters: we could not but remember that such things were, and were most precious to us. They praise Dibdin's *Quaker*, but justly remark, that play-house representations of Quakers are unnatural, and generally disgusting.

It appears by Critique No. 8, that the body of critics had been called "liar and assassin," but they say "they are none"—and go on as usual. They talk of Hodgkinsons "bawling," and of *Poor Vulcan*, that it is "insipid, tasteless, and unentertaining"—praising the "modest diffidence" of Miss Broadhurst in all she does.

In remarking on the comedy of *Know Your Own Mind*, and its performance, they ask "Why was not the part of Miss Neville given to Mrs. Johnson, or Mrs. Hallam?" [It was played by Mrs. Cleveland.] "Where was Mr. Hallam when the part of Captain Bygrove was *cast* upon Mr. Munto, who, whenever he appears "in uniform," perpetually reminds us of a servant in livery." Madame Gardie, the fascinating dancer and pantomime

actress, whose story ended so fatally in tragedy, played in this comedy a *speaking part*, Madame Larouge, and was "perfectly natural." They laugh at the manager's apology for the non-appearance of a performer, who he said could not appear but "at the risk of her life and future health."

Cumberland's *Jew* was performed, March 21st, 1796, and Hodgkinson played Sheva with that versatile excellence which rendered him so remarkable, and after it, his Walter, in *The Children in the Wood*, showed even superior powers. Miss Harding and Master Stockwell were the children; the first, Mr. Hodgkinson's ward, a pretty, innocent, black-eyed girl, looking as if she might be destined to a life of purity and happiness. The comedy is deservedly praised by the critics as abounding in "the purest morality, and the most instructive lessons of disinterested virtue."

The principal thing to be noted in the *critique* on the excellent comedy of *The Clandestine Marriage*, is the just reprehension of the manager for putting a poor deformed idiot, of the name of Roberts, into the fine part of Canton. Those who remember Baddely and Wewitzer, in London, and Darley and Harwood, in New-York, will think of the murder of poor Canton in the hands of one thus described by the Mohawks, one "whose dress and figure reminds us of the *ponies* in the races at the *circus*." They lament that they could not express at the time their disapprobation of the ma-

nager, without hurting the feelings of the *actor*. Gentle savages!

In their notice of *Jane Shore*, the savages are *really gentle*. They are more—they are complimentary. The ladies, however, have the greater share in their praise, and we know they deserved it. Mrs. Melmoth's Alicia, and Mrs. Johnson's penitent Jane, were, the first full of fiery passion, the second of tender pathos. Mr. Hallam had the merit of being respectable in Hastings, at the same time that he was, as Mercutio, in *high*, and Jabel, Mungo, Clod, and many other *low* comedy parts, far above mediocrity.

The Belle's Stratagem, Mountaineers, Irish Widow, Florizel and Perdita, Alexander the Great, Maid of the Mill, &c., pass under review, and are treated fairly, and the performers quite as gently as heretofore. Of *The Archers* we have spoken elsewhere—we may observe here, that the critics treat it with as much favour as it deserves. They take the occasion to recommend a national drama, and an independence in literature, as well as politics. In a second critique on the piece, they express themselves more fully in its favour, both in the serious and comic parts.

As the benefits came on, the critiques became more complimentary and less discriminating. *Charlotte and Werter*, by Reynolds, was *got up*, but received very coldly; and the critics censured both the play and the performance of it.

On the 20th of May, the band of censors were called to an account for all their missayings and misdoings, by *Verax*—who tells them they are *ignorant*, for they have not travelled—they are young—they are malicious—and that they war upon the actors because they are emigrants. The critics made no answer to this attack on them—probably they thought it *unanswerable*. This curious performance was known to come from Mr. Hodgkinson.

As the young men took no notice of *Verax*, and continued to give good advice to the actors, particularly Mr. William King, he challenged them to mortal combat, severally and individually—but, strange to say, they took no more notice of Mr. King than they had done of his friend and brother *Verax*.

There is something so very characteristic in Hodgkinson's advertisement, notifying his approaching benefit, that we will insert it.

"Mr. Hodgkinson respectfully acquaints the public in general, that his benefit will be on Monday, May 30, when will be presented the comedy of *Much ado about Nothing*, written by Shakespeare."

The same Mr. Prigmore, so utterly worthless as a man and an actor, the hero of the tale of the widow and the breeches, furnishes us occasion to call from their obscure resting-place some just remarks in a style of elegance, which alone could entitle them to a place in this history of our dra-

matic literature ; but when we know that they are from the pen of John Wells, they receive additional value.

Prigmore, being entitled to a benefit, and having certain claims upon a certain class of theatrical visiters, whose favour he secured, by what players call *mumming*, contrived to attract a full house composed of *patrons* who could see his merits. A full house on a benefit night is considered by an actor as a mark of the estimation he or she is held in by the public. There is nothing more fallacious. To produce this evidence of public favour, and the dollars attendant on it, every art is resorted to, and a benefit-bill is generally a gull-trap. We have recorded elsewhere the *Melocosmeotis* of Chalmers, who was no favourite, and its success, and might mention many other instances. On this occasion, May 16th, 1796, Prigmore produced what was called a new play, *The School for Citizens*, and with "Jonathan's description of New-York," "Auld Robin Grey," "Slaves in Algiers," &c. &c. succeeded in obtaining his object.

The play is *our object*, particularly as it called into exertion the pen of a distinguished friend, a portion of whose remarks we extract. *The School for Citizens*, says he, "is an altered comedy from an English one of a different name, and an attempt made to adapt the language and incidents to this country. The design, unhappy in its conception, is rendered still more so in the execution, as it robs the original piece of much of its consistency, and

leaves us one marked with many irregularities, though not the irregularities of genius.

The practice of borrowing an original work from another nation, and accommodating it to our own, is a species of plagiarism, which involves the reputation of a country in which it is permitted. Our infancy as a people, the equal though moderate distribution of property, and the consequent necessity for personal industry, have hitherto, with us, suppressed the exercise of talents to any extensive degree in the dramatic line. Early occupied with procuring the means of subsistence, and the cares of providing for a family, the mind, with us, is naturally directed to the cultivation of that knowledge which most effectually answers the common purposes of life : hence the learning of America is rather of the useful than splendid kind, rather calculated to form the massy Doric than the Corinthian capitals of science. As our literary pursuits, therefore, are of the robust kind, and we are obliged to resort to the foreign source for the more delicate productions of genius, which serve to amuse our leisure hours, and soften for a time the cares of real life, we cannot too severely reprehend the mean and unmanly spirit which would supply, by a pitiful alteration of names, to the people of America, those sentiments of national compliments which were originally devoted to the service of another. It is an appropriation too disgraceful ever to become an acceptable offering to a sensible people."

The American dramatist, who steals the whole or part of an English play, cannot escape detection, and can only, like Mr. Prigmore, hope for a harvest from the benefit nights. English dramatists have for ages translated from the Continental languages, and given no credit to the original authors. At the time Kotzebue brought the German school into fashion, the playwrights employed to measure out dialogue and pantomime by the yard for the London theatres were superseded by the honest, homely translators of German plays, the Thomsons and Plumbres. They took the alarm, and all joined in crying down the German drama; the hired journalists followed in the hue and cry, and John Bull was convinced that nothing could be so absurd as the exhibitions he had been weeping over, or had received with shouts of applause and peals of laughter. This done, the cunning manufacturers for the theatres had the poor Germans at their mercy; and for years whole scenes and whole plots were given to admiring audiences as English *every inch*, and filled with *true British* patriotism, although they were stolen from those very calumniated Germans whom the plagiarists had decried by sound of trumpet.

At an after-period appeared some playful strictures upon plays, managers, actors, and audiences, under the names of Jonathan Oldstyle and Andrew Quoz, which we shall hereafter quote largely from. They are from the pen of Washington Irving, and

first published in the Morning Chronicle, then edited by his brother, Doctor Peter Irving, a gentleman of the first talents, and of feelings as purely honourable as ever resided in the breast of man.

CHAPTER XVII.

Agreement between John Hodgkinson and William Dunlap, on the one part, and the Committee empowered by the Proprietors of the Park Theatre, on the other—Re-appearance of Mrs. Hallam on the Stage, June, 1797—Agreement with the Proprietors of the Hay-market Theatre, Boston—Hodgkinson and Company in Boston, July, 1797.

WE will continue the history of the old American or New-York Company, to the conclusion of the season of 1796-7, and of the formation of a new company for the Park theatre.

On the 25th of May, 1797, after various tedious preliminary negotiations, which had iddenae expressed wish that William Dunlap and John Hodgkinson should become joint lessees of the New or Park theatre, and make such arrangement with Lewis Hallam as should be satisfactory, a meeting took place between William Henderson, the acting agent for the committee of proprietors, and Messrs. Dunlap and Hodgkinson, and the following terms were agreed upon for three years and a half, or four playing seasons, to commence the ensuing autumn, as soon as the house could be made ready for exhibitions. The lessees agreed to pay on the gross receipts of the house nightly, thus: on any sum from 450 to 500 dollars, 5 per cent.; from

5 to 600 dollars, 10 per cent. ; from 6 to 700 dollars, 12½ per cent. ; from 7 to 800 dollars, 15 per cent. ; from 8 to 1200 dollars and upwards, 20 per cent. On benefit nights the rent was to be 10 per cent. on the receipt. Thus for a receipt under 450 dollars no house-rent was to be paid ; but the night which gave a receipt of 1200 dollars paid 240 dollars rent. The managers were to proceed to the organization of the company, and the proprietors to the finishing that part of the building necessary to the commencement of theatrical performances, and such scenery and machinery as might be sufficient to begin with.

By the agreement of the managers, they were jointly to direct the theatre. The actor was to receive, as such, 20 dollars a week, 5 dollars a week for his wardrobe, and 30 dollars a week for superintending the stage, rehearsals, &c., making 55 dollars per week. His partner was to have, as treasurer and joint director, 24 dollars per week.

The managers offered to Lewis Hallam to become purchasers of his theatrical property, and, in addition, to give him one-fourth of any profits they might make during the time of their lease of the new theatre.

Early in June, a formal meeting took place between the managers attended by Dr. E. H. Smith, and Mr. Hallam attended by Philip Brasher, Esq., in which Mr. Hallam agreed to sell his share in wardrobe, &c., and to accept the offer of one-fourth of the profits of the new theatre, and the mana-

gers agreed to engage him and his wife as actors in the company at the first salaries.

Mrs. Hallam reappeared on the John Street stage, playing Lady Teazle, and spoke the following prologue, written by Mr. Milne. It was printed in the papers of the day, and the words marked as here in italics.

These flattering plaudits cannot fail to raise
 A *wish* to merit such transcendent praise ;
 It can but be a *wish*, for Ah !—my heart
 Knows *merit* could not claim a thousandth part :
 But like the lavish hand of Heaven, you
 Give largely e'en though nothing should be due.
 O'ercome with joy, my anxious throbbing heart,
 Disdaining all the little tricks of art,
 Conceals those feelings in a grateful breast
 Which *may* be *felt*, but *cannot* be *express'd*.
 Time has now swept ten rolling years away,
 Since flattering plaudits graced my first essay* ;
 Young, giddy, rash, ambitious, and untaught,
 You still caress'd, excusing many a fault ;
 With friendly hand safe led me through the way
 Where lurking error watches to betray :
 And shall I such advantages forego
 With my consent ? I frankly answer, No :
 I may through inadvertency have stray'd,
 But who by folly *never* was betray'd ?
 If e'er my judgment played the foolish part,
 I acted not in concert with my heart.
 I boldly can defy the world to say
 From my first entrée to the present day,
 Whate'er my errors, numerous or few,
 I never wanted gratitude to you.
 On your indulgence still I'll rest my cause ;
 Will you support me with your kind applause ?
 You verify the truth of Pope's fine line—
 "To err is human ; to forgive, divine."

* She made her first appearance in the after-piece of *The Guardian*, Hallam playing the guardian, she the ward.

Thus, literally, was this extraordinary performance spoken and published at the time.

J. B. Williamson, the manager of the Boston Federal Street theatre, about this time, June, 1797, broke up his company, and part of them joined Harper's company at Providence. Hodgkinson left New-York for Boston, to pass through Newport, and to employ a portion of the New-York company there, and make arrangements for opening the Haymarket.

Mr. Williamson went to Charleston, S. C. and was for a time the principal performer there, and his wife a great favourite in the romps and other lively characters of comedy. She died at Charleston on the 31st of October, 1799.

On the 18th of June, three of the proprietors of the Boston Haymarket theatre, viz. Messrs. Osborne, Gardner, and Blake, arrived in New-York. They wished to see Hodgkinson, to make an agreement with him for their property. "He might have it on his own terms." The next day Hodgkinson returned from Boston, having engaged the Haymarket for four years for himself and partner. This theatre was a large wooden building, which had been erected from a spirit of opposition, partly political, and was owned by the democrats or anti-federalists. It was opposite to the southern corner of the Mall or Common.

The articles of agreement were, that, for the use of said house for four seasons, consisting of sixty playing nights, commencing in June or July, and

terminating in October or November, and for the use of all scenery, wardrobe, &c. belonging to the theatre, the managers shall pay 10 per cent. on the gross receipts; the house not to be used as a theatre during this period, except by consent of said managers; and, after the present year, if the managers choose, they may pay fifty dollars per night, in lieu of the ten per cent. This agreement was signed by John Winthrop, Caleb Stimson, Joseph Blake, jun., and George Blake. This was an additional step in the road to ruin.

On the 24th of June, the articles of agreement between the managers of the old American Company, and Carlisle Pollock, Jacob Morton, Edward Livingston, and William Henderson, on behalf of the proprietors of the new theatre, were formally agreed to on the plan above stated. The seasons to be from the first of October to the tenth of June, and at least one hundred nights of playing, "unless some public calamity prevents it."

Hodgkinson went on with the company, and opened the theatre in Hartford on the 3rd of July; sixty-seven dollars in the house—another step on the downhill road. After a few nights' playing, the house was closed, and the deficiencies remitted from New-York. The proprietors of the Hartford theatre were discontented, and Hodgkinson, to satisfy them, promised to send on a company of comedians, when he arrived in Boston. In consequence of this promise, he entered into engagements with Solee, forwarding him to Hartford and

afterwards to New-York, where he opened the John Street theatre in opposition to Wignell's Greenwich Street house.

On the 24th of July, 1797, Hodgkinson opened the Haymarket theatre, Boston, with *The Grecian Daughter* and *Romp*. His receipts were 220 dollars. He engaged Mr. and Mrs. C. Powell, at 32 dollars per week; Mr. and Mrs. S. Powell, and Miss Harrison, at 42 dollars; Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, and two Miss Westrays, at 50 dollars; and Mrs. Peck, at 12 dollars; in addition to his company, already too large for the time.

Collins and Crosby having quarrelled, were preparing for the settlement which honour required; but the magistracy interfered, and the heroes, after lying in jail some hours, were examined. Sir Richard was dismissed and Collins remanded to prison, but afterwards liberated, on condition of removing his honour out of the commonwealth. This man's real name was Phipps.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Powell were afterwards at New-York, valuable members of the company, and will be hereafter mentioned. The Miss Westrays proved distinguished ornaments to the drama, in every point of view. The history of the American theatre would be deficient if many pages were not devoted to Mrs. Wood, (then Miss Westray), and Mrs. Darley, (Miss E. Westray). Their mother, Mrs. Simpson, was long on the New-York theatre, playing the line of old women.

Mr. Hodgkinson had now increased his expenses in Boston to upwards of 1100 dollars per week, and played on his second night (Mrs. Johnson's first appearance that season) to 144 dollars, which, at three nights the week, at that rate, amounted to 432 dollars for the week's receipts. To oppose Wignell, he had engaged Solee to go to New-York and Philadelphia, with Mr. and Mrs. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard, (who wisely joined Wignell) Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, and Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock. This company, many of them good performers, failed in John Street, New-York, as we have seen, and Hodgkinson's letters induced his partner to support Solee by his credit, ultimately to great loss.

Hodgkinson's next managerial step was to engage Chalmers at 25 dollars, and Williamson, a singer, at 18, and despatch them with Messrs. Cleveland, S. Powell, Dickinson, Kenny, Seymour, M'Knight, and Simpson—and Mesdames S. Powell, Cleveland, Simpson, Seymour, with Misses Westray, and E. Westray, to Hartford, paying all expenses and guaranteeing their salaries. Mr. Hodgkinson's partner sent on money and advice; the one was taken, the other rejected.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Orchestra—The Swiss Catholic Priest—The Inquisition—The Victim's Tale—The Ex-noble—Young, an English musician, executed for murder—M. Pellesier—Monsieur and Madame Gardie, their Story and Tragical Death.

WE have noticed the improvements made by Mr. Hodgkinson in the orchestra at New-York, improvements rendered necessary by the excellence of this branch of theatrical arrangement in the rival company of Philadelphia. Instead of the "one Mr. Pelham," and his harpsichord, or the single fiddle of Mr. Hewlett, performers of great skill filled the bands of the two rival cities. In New-York, the musicians were principally French, most of them gentlemen who had seen better days, some driven from Paris by the revolution, some of them nobles, some officers in the army of the king, others who had sought refuge from the devastation of St. Domingo.

The stories of these men would fill volumes. We will select one. The subject of it was not French, and the cause of his taking refuge in America was not revolutionary. The singularity of his appearance and behaviour attracted the notice of the manager, and on inquiry he was stated to have been a priest, and to be versed in languages, ancient and modern. The manager was studying

German, and busied in translating the popular plays of the day; and, as the musician's native tongue was German, he being a native of a German Canton of Switzerland, and being master of English as well as most other modern tongues, he became very acceptable as a companion, and was soon employed as a teacher in the manager's family.

He was a man of herculean mould, past the meridian of life, heavy in his movements unless excited, and then both his person and face became suddenly animated from listlessness to wildness. His large blue eyes, generally mild, were often suffused with tears, but, when certain subjects were touched upon, glared madly, while his teeth were set convulsively. The manager had a retreat at Perth Amboy, and, when released from the cares of the theatre, retired thither with his family, of which the musician made an interesting and acceptable member. He spoke of his having been a priest. He talked of his having experienced the horrors of the Inquisition in Madrid.

There are few subjects which take so decided a hold on the imagination as tales of the Inquisition. The mystery involving its enormous power, the darkness surrounding its black officials, and the silence attendant upon their movements, the sufferings in the solitary cells, the tortures inflicted at its tribunals, the manifold miseries attendant upon its victims living, and the awful horrors of death at the *auto da fé*, all combine to form one hideous,

indistinct, gigantic image at which the soul sickens. There are few but have had an insatiable desire to read anything relative to this gloomy, and terrifying, and mysterious, power. The triumphs of the *auto dafé* are plain, full, and apparent—but imagination retires from these midday horrors, where power, wealth, beauty, regal magnificence, and the emblems and ministers of the religion of mercy and love, exult over and feast upon the tortures of their fellow-creatures, to the blacker and more secret horrors of the dark dungeons, solitary cells, subterranean galleries, and midnight tribunals, of the impenetrable prison-house—impenetrable to all but its fiend-like ministers, and the predoomed wretches who have fallen within their iron grasp.

Such were the feelings of the man who found himself the host of one who had been a tenant of those dungeons, and could unfold their mysteries; and who hinted that he had experienced the power of this infernal institution in sufferings worse than death. When he appeared lost and abstracted in thought, or sought solitude, or laughed bitterly, or when, at the relation of some instance of virtue in his presence, his eyes became suffused with tears, and he was unable to restrain his morbid sensibility—the image of that power which had broken down such a frame and such a mind immediately presented itself.

One day, as he accompanied his friend in a ramble over the fields of the neighbourhood, and conversed of European affairs and manners, the abuses which



had crept into the church, as we Protestants believe, occupied their attention, and he descanted with eloquent bitterness on the vices and corruption of the popish clergy in Europe.

“ Why, you have told me that you yourself are one of the priesthood.”

“ Yes,” he replied, “ accursed be the hour that enrolled me on the list of those who vow to renounce nature, and bid defiance to the first command of God! Accursed be the moment when the folly of my mother devoted me to hypocrisy, guilt, and misery! Yes, in my mother’s womb I was devoted a sacrifice on the altar. Such is superstition! A mother, the tenderest of all characters, to make, as she thinks, her peace with Heaven, offers up her unborn child as a victim, to be trained from the cradle in ceremonies and observations, to be bound in manhood by vows to contravene the laws of nature, to be dragged, for his obedience to the commands of his Creator, from the air and light of heaven to the dungeons and tortures of the hellish Inquisition!” He could speak no more. His eyes, which had glared furiously while he spoke, became dim—his teeth grated, and then became fixed—his hands were clenched—his whole frame convulsed—an hysteric laugh relieved him—tears followed—he continued the walk for some time in silence. After becoming calm, he thus told his story.

“ I was told, before I was capable of comprehending the nature of any obligation, that I was

vowed by my mother to the priesthood. All my education tended to that point. As a child, I could have no objection. It appeared desirable to become one of those whose appearance inspired awe, and whose dress and occupation marked them as superiors. I had afterwards my doubts and misgivings; but no circumstance occurred to break the chain by which I was led to destruction. I went through the studies and the forms: I took the vows, and became a servant of the Church of Rome. My mind acquiesced—I had an unshaken reverence for the ministers of the church; for, in my simple and free country, virtue was an inmate of every dwelling, whatever the faith of its possessor professed, or whatever his condition of life. I was pure in intention, and virtuous in action. A regiment was raised in our canton for the service of the king of Spain, and I was appointed its chaplain. To visit a foreign country, surrounded by hundreds of my countrymen, who looked up to me as a father and instructor, was a delightful prospect to a young man, for the desire to travel is common to youth, and to be revered and beloved, and return good offices for love. I felt to be common to man. The regiment was marched to Spain, and quartered in Madrid.

“Oh what a contrast between the inhabitants of cities and those of the country! The love of God and of my neighbour fills my breast in the fields, and in the woods, and on the hill-top—even now—even now—but, in the streets and crowds

of the city, my God is forgotten, and my neighbour appears unworthy of love. What a contrast was there between these Spaniards, slaves to their king, their nobles, and their vices, and the free-born rustic sons of the mountains! The surrounding objects, the manners I saw, both in the laity and clergy, had a powerful, deteriorating effect upon my young mind. My passions, which had been restrained by awe, not subdued by a rational sense of duty, were here aroused, and they aroused my mind to an examination of those vows, in making which I had forsworn nature and contravened the mandates of God.

“The passion which is given to be our greatest joy, the bond of social union, the source of virtuous action, I had forsworn, and that sin against nature ruined me. I saw and loved a Spanish lady. I appeared worthy in her eyes of reciprocal affection. I was not then the wretched thing you see. I was full of youth, and life, and health, and strength. I could have bounded from rock to rock, like the chamois of my native hills—I could—pshaw! fool!” He wiped the drops from his forehead and proceeded.

“I saw in the clearest point of view the horrible state of bondage to which I had been doomed before my birth, and I determined to free myself. At my confessional I met the object of my love, a love pure and holy, and there, and only there—in a situation where apparently the possibility of being overheard was provided against—our plans of

flight, and marriage, and future life, were arranged. First England was to receive us, and then America—the refuge of the oppressed! This blessed country was to be our asylum and our country. The day was fixed—it had nearly arrived, when I was seized, bound, and hurried to the dungeons of the Inquisition.”

A long pause ensued, and struggles almost to convulsion took place before he could proceed. “No third person had been confided in. I felt confident that my secret was unknown—I had dreadful misgivings and forebodings—but hope assured me that I had been seized through error. I demanded the cause of my arrest; but these adamantine demons gave no answer; nor after the first scrutinizing stare did they deign to cast a glance on my visage. Then the truth rushed on me—even the confessional was subject to the espionage of the terrible power that had cast its net around me, and held me a helpless, hopeless victim. The key of my cell turned, the bolts grated, and I was left to darkness and solitude. Do not expect me to describe the mental tortures I endured; if I could recall them, I should go mad—where, where was the dear one on whom my hope of earthly happiness had been fixed? What would be her torture when she found herself abandoned!

“Hours, days, weeks, months, passed before these demons deigned to relieve this suspense, and give me the comparative felicity of despair. At

length, four mute ministers of the inhuman power visited me, and the light of a lamp for the second time showed me the walls of my dungeon. They decorated me with the insignia of guilt, and led me to the dread tribunal of those who condemn before trial, and torture their victims to force the confession of guilt for the justification of the judges. I was required to confess my crime without having any charge made against me. I remained silent. They threatened. I persisted in silence, and was remanded to my dungeon. A second time I was brought before them, and the instruments of torture displayed. I preserved my silence, and was sent back to darkness and solitude. The third time on which I was led to my condemners, I was charged with the crime of intending to abjure my vows, and throw off my allegiance to the church ; and my whole plan was detailed to me with a faithfulness which a transcript from my soul could only have equalled. My heart died within me. A cloud came over my bewildered mind ; my senses failed, and when I awoke I was alone in my horrible cell. In my horrible cell I remained alone two years. I have been able since to compute the time, not then. All was then a void of darkness ; or, when I could reflect and look back on past days, pangs which made the moments of madness desirable, racked me, until I howled curses on the authors of my existence. When I looked back upon the manner in which I had been devoted to misery before my

birth, then led on from infancy, an unsuspecting victim, in the way marked out for me before I saw the light, and my feet trained to the pit in which I now groaned—when I looked forward to the years in which I must endure my sufferings, before my strength would yield and death relieve me—I arraigned the justice of Heaven—my mind, loathing the error which had led to my destruction, rebelled against truth, and abandoned its Creator—I abandoned and was abandoned by my God ! At the end of two years I was roused from sleep—for even such a wretch had the consolation of sleep—the ministers of cruelty entered, seized me—stretched me on the stone floor of my dungeon, bound my limbs with cords to the iron rings which were fixed for the purposes of torture, near the corner of the cell, and—see—my mutilated body testifies the truth of my tale—how long it was before I recovered the use of my senses I know not—let me end. When I was sufficiently recovered to be able to totter a few steps, I was led from my cell, a most loathsome object, and thrust from a private gate of the infernal region into the street, about the hour of midnight. The demon who turned me thus, powerless, shelterless, and without the means of procuring subsistence, upon a world which had been deprived of all its charms to me, opened his mouth and accosted me with the first words I had heard for years, except my own ravings. I remember them well. ‘ Go, be not seen near this building. Be not found in

Spain ten days hence. You always will have, as you always have had, the eye of the holy Inquisition on you.'

"I crawled by the aid of the walls. I remembered a friend who might shelter me, and reached his dwelling before the dawn of the first daylight I had seen in three years. When with difficulty I could make myself known to my friend—he proved himself truly such—he did all that could be done to alleviate my misery, and I embarked for America in less than ten days from the time I saw the light, which had no longer joy for my eyes or my heart." "The lady?" "She had disappeared about the time I was missing, and never was heard of more."

Such was one of the members of the orchestra. Most of his companions considered themselves as the victims of democracy. He knew himself to be the victim of an institution which could only exist in a monarchy or aristocracy. He was bitter in his expressions against those institutions which they loved. His hate of monarchies and hierarchies was deep; *they* adored the source of their former ease and splendour. He had no companions in the theatre. A brother arrived from Switzerland, and the ex-priest stripped himself of all the property he had accumulated to help his brother. He received offers from Havanna of a situation as a musician, went thither, and yellow fever soon ended his unfortunate life.

Among the musicians was a former captain of a

Bourbon horse, a fine fellow, who now eked out his income by making ice-creams. Another, a *ci-devant* noble, is remembered, always mild, gentlemanly, and silent. There was one, who without circumlocution offered his services as a go-between in any affair of what is called gallantry, that might suit those who could pay or patronize him. He was a noble by the rotten institutions of Europe—the Swiss peasant was a noble from the hand of nature, persecuted and destroyed by those institutions.

Young, an Englishman, was the bassoon player of the orchestra. He had contracted debts, and, on the deputy sheriff or constable attempting to arrest him, he drew forth a pistol and shot him. The desperate man was immediately secured, shortly after tried, condemned, and executed. He committed the murder on the 29th of June, 1797. About the middle of August, the governor requested, by letter, James Kent, Esq., then recorder of the city, to attend, with the other magistrates, upon the execution of this miserable man; the sheriff being apprehensive of a rescue, the governor ordered out a large detachment of the militia, with arms and ammunition, to support the sheriff. The criminal was accordingly guarded thus to the place of expiation, but no tumult of any kind occurred.

Mons. Victor Pellesier must not be forgotten in a notice of the orchestra. He was a performer on the horn, and a composer. His music for an

opera, called *Sterne's Maria, or the Vintage*, is remembered with pleasure. He was a short, old gentleman, and so near-sighted as to be nearly blind. He was always cheerful, and his thoughts as fully occupied by notes as any banker or broker in Wall Street.

We have slightly mentioned, in a former chapter, the sad story and death of Monsieur and Madame Gardie. From Messrs. Ciceri and Pellesier, the writer obtained a more detailed account of the catastrophe, and the story of the former part of the lives of these unhappy young people, than could be given by persons not acquainted personally with them, speaking their language, and frequenting the house which was their place of abode, and where the desperate act of the deluded man was achieved.

Gardie was the son of a nobleman, the king's receiver-general at La Rochelle, and possessor of great wealth. The young man was idle and dissipated; the expectation of inheriting great riches operated to the destruction of that ambition which would have rendered him worthy of their possession. His father, wishing to remove him from the haunts of idleness, and to give that employment which would correct present unprofitable habits, sent him to St. Domingo, as his agent in some commercial business. There he saw and formed an intimacy with a beautiful and fascinating woman, the mother of a male infant, who, as an actress, for that was her profession, enchanted the

public when on the stage, and in private life was the charmer of all who approached her. This woman had lived as wife with a performer of the name of Maurison, who was the father of the infant, at this time her solace and care, for she had separated herself from Maurison, on finding him unworthy of her affections. He had gone to France, and, being a man of abilities, and carrying with him property from the Cape, he was elected one of the municipality of Lyons after the revolution, and shared the fate of thousands, the fate of blood and death, during the reign of terror.

Gardie and the fascinating actress became united, and she accompanied him on his return to La Rochelle; she continued to exercise her professional abilities, and was not received into his father's family. The revolution, although it deprived the elder Gardie of his title, neither took from him his wealth nor his office; he was alive at the time of which we write, and receiver-general at La Rochelle

One evening, when the beautiful actress was on the stage, she was called upon to sing the *Marseillois Hymn*. She refused. The cause of her refusal is not stated. The audience were enraged—she was withdrawn from the stage, and, at that time of universal excitement, found it necessary to fly the country. Gardie left country and family, and accompanied the mistress of his destiny. They returned to Cape François. On the insurrection of the blacks, they took refuge in

this country, where they lived as man and wife, he principally supported by her salary as a dancer and pantomime actress, for her skill as a comedian was nugatory, where her language could not be understood by the frequenters of the theatre. The boy knew him as a father and the husband of his mother ; as a husband and a father he was exemplary. The ballet and pantomime establishment had been lopped off from the New-York theatre in consequence of scanty receipts. Gardie's principal resource for support was copying music. When Mr. Hodgkinson, in 1798, had determined to leave New-York for Boston, he employed Gardie to copy the orchestra music belonging to the theatre of the first place. He went away, and even that source failed. The young man was in debt, and as he himself thought without resource—he was helpless and friendless. His wife, for such she was in the eye of law and society here, solicited, importuned, him to write to his father. He now resolved to return to him. He wished her to return with him, but she could not conquer her repugnance to the family which had rejected her, and the people who had chased her from the stage and the country. She refused to return. It appears that a separation had been agreed upon, whether final or temporary is not known. He had engaged his passage for France, and she had been the evening before her death at Mr. Hallam's, consulting as to the means of enabling her to return to St. Domingo.

On the fatal and horrible night, Gardie occupied a small bed in the third story, in the same chamber in which his wife and her boy, now about eight years of age, slept. The boy was waked in the night, and found himself in his supposed father's arms, who was in the act of removing him from his mother's bed, to place him in that which had witnessed his agonies while he watched until his victim should sleep. There was no light. On the boy inquiring why he removed him from his mother, he bade him be quiet and not wake his mamma, then laid him in the bed from which he had himself risen, and the boy again fell asleep; but soon starting at the sound of a groan, which he thought proceeded from his mother, the little lad in great terror called out, "What is the matter, papa? What is the matter with mamma?" "Hush!" was the reply; "your mamma is not well—but she sleeps—don't disturb her."

Again the child slept, unconscious that death in his most horrid forms of murder and suicide was at his side, and the murderer's task half achieved. A noise of falling, struggling, and groans, a third time awoke the boy; his calls were unanswered—all was dark and silent—his terror increased when he found that he received no answer to his repeated calls on his father and mother—he left his bed, and, groping his way, his little hands encountered the yet warm corpse of his father on the floor; and he felt the blood, as it yet oozed from the wounds, and, unknowing what he did, he

pressed his little fingers into the gaping gashes, whence life had scarcely escaped.

Wild with terror, the child reached the door of the chamber, and it not being fastened he fled, leaving the door open, and found his way to the mistress of the boarding-house, who was awakened by his cries. His tale was incoherent and unintelligible. His "papa and his mamma—his papa and his mamma," were the only words understood. His cries were not attended to, and he was sternly ordered to go to bed. Thus repulsed, and not daring to return to the dreadful chamber, he sought the bed of one of the negro servants, and crept trembling to his side.

About the break of day the dogs of the house found their way to the scene of blood, and with the most piteous cries gave vent to their feelings. Several times they ran howling up and down stairs before the family were alarmed. On entering the room, they found the miserable murderer lying in the middle of the floor, weltering in his blood; his right-hand above his head still grasping the knife, his face and limbs horribly distorted—it appeared that he had been forced to inflict several wounds on himself before he fell. She had been killed by one blow, and lay as if asleep. He had probably thought to be merciful in murder. Such misery and such crime are not to be charged to the theatre. They are found everywhere. They are the fruits of error and vicious indulgence.

CHAPTER XIX.

Cause of the Decline of the Drama, and Remedies proposed.

IN a former chapter we have recommended the interference of the state in the regulation of the theatre. The more we reflect upon the subject, the more we are convinced of the propriety, utility, and necessity, of the measure. It is a great and powerful engine for good or ill; and though its general tendency may have been favourable to civilization and morals, evils have attended, and do attend it. In Germany, where it is altogether under the direction and control of the government, one of these evils is unknown; and where it is under the supervision and partial direction of the rulers, it is in its worst form avoided, as in France. The evil we mean, and shall protest against, is that which arises from the English and American regulation of theatres, which allots a distinct portion of the proscenium to those unfortunate females who have been the victims of seduction. In Germany, the theatre is the prince's; it is directed by a literary man in his service. The director and players are paid by the government, and, being chosen for talents and moral conduct, are honoured by the prince and his court. Here the theatre is the peo-

ple's, as all things are ; and the representatives and guardians of the people ought to prevent the mis-use and perversion of it in any way. The directors ought to be controlled to their own and the public good by the official servants of the public, and, in the particular abuse above mentioned, the prohibition of the immoral display would remove a just stigma from the theatre, and would further the views of managers by increasing their receipts.

In France, the theatres are under strict control, and some of them are supported by the government. The abominable regulation which causes this evil is there unknown, and the evil is unknown. It is not practicable to exclude the impure and the vicious from public resorts, neither is it to be wished. If the drama is such as a good government ought to permit, its influence cannot be ill on the immoral auditor, and may be good. But no separate place should be set apart, to present to the gaze of the matron and virgin the unabashed votaries of vice, and to tempt the yet unsullied youth, by the example of the false face which depravity assumes for the purpose of enticing to guilt.

We would not propose that our countrymen should take any European mode of government for a model ; or that the theatres of America should be regulated according to the usages of Germany and France ; but we do hope that what is good will be adopted from the laws and customs of every country, as far as it can be adapted to our

republican institutions. In France the audience see no display of the nature we have mentioned. It is only in England and America that the nuisance exists. If a regulation was enforced, that no female should come to a theatre unattended by a protector of the other sex, except such whose standing in society is a passport to every place, the evil would be effectually remedied. The moral would not be deterred from a rational amusement, and the public and the manager would both be benefited.

The improper, indecent, and scandalous practice of setting apart a portion of the boxes for this most disgusting display of shameless vice, has no connexion with the question of the utility of theatres. The prostitution of the pencil, the graver, or that mighty engine, the press, to the purposes of vice, immorality, or irreligion, might with equal propriety be charged against those modes of ameliorating or instructing society.

It is to be lamented that when the people of Massachusetts introduced the theatre in their capital, having the experience of the world before them, they had not set an example to their fellow-citizens, by purifying the dramatic establishment and abolishing this evil. They appear to have noticed it, but, instead of remedying, they, if possible, made it worse. The Federal Street theatre provided a separate entrance for those who came for the express purpose of alluring to vice. The

boxes displayed the same row of miserable victims, decked in smiles and borrowed finery, and the entrance could only, by its separation from those appropriated to the residue of the audience, become a screen inviting to secret guilt. The new theatre of Philadelphia gave an opportunity for reform, as did that of New-York ; but these opportunities were neglected, and those who wished to support, as a mode of improvement, the representation of good dramatic works, have been driven from the boxes by the spectacle presented, not on the stage, but on seats placed opposite to them, and attracting their attention *from* the stage.

Since writing the above, we have seen the English theatre charged by an English writer with "disgraceful arrangements, which would not be endured in the most dissolute capital of the Continent, and which seem intended to justify the severe denunciations of those who entertain religious scruples about the stage." The same writer says : "We venture to hope, that one theatre will break the unholy association with open vice and immorality, by imitating the stricter police of the Continental theatres."

We will venture to hope that, not only one theatre, but all will break this unholy alliance. There is the more reason to hope, from the conviction that, as a mere money-making speculation, it would be found for the interest of all concerned. But if managers will not so regulate the police of

the theatre, we hope that grand juries or legislative bodies will take the regulation into their hands.

Our forefathers, both in America and England, saw the noblest efforts of the mind of man, when presented by the stage, accompanied by meanness in theatres and decorations, and frequently by mediocrity in the performers who gave them utterance. We see splendid theatres, excellent performers, beautiful scenery, classical decorations, and appropriate dresses, but the plays brought out as meagre, mean, and despicable as the barns and sail-lofts which formerly echoed with the inspirations of Shakspeare, or the laughter excited by the wit of Congreve. Have not the dimensions of theatres been one cause of the degradation of the Drama? We can hardly conceive that the perfection of the painter and the player has caused the deterioration of the dramatist—unless, that dramatists have been induced to write plays to suit the ability or whim of the player, and relied on his support instead of their own resources—or, that managers have thought it cheaper or more profitable to display gilding and paint, accompanied by the inanity of a playwright hired by the week, than the effusions of a poet, whose words could not be heard from a stage removed beyond the sound of human voice. The huge house requires an exertion of the actor's voice which destroys its melody, and renders variety of intonation impossible. The expression of the actor's face

cannot be seen by the spectator, and to endeavour to convey ideas by the countenance, exaggeration and grimace are resorted to. To see or to hear, the spectator and auditor must overstrain attention, and overstrained attention causes pain and weariness, instead of the delight we seek.

Another evil flowing from large theatres, is that desire to fill them, which has induced the shameful exhibitions of monsters, and beasts, and other vulgar shows. This is one reason of their being left to such audiences as are fit for such exhibitions; and, until this evil, and the still greater, which we have combated in the commencement of this chapter, are removed, we cannot hope to see audiences of the learned, the wise, and the good, attending to the productions of the poet, the wit, and the moralist.

END OF VOL. I.

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